

Strategic Partnership With the West

Russian Strategic Cooperation with NATO and the European Union (1999 – 2004)

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Forord

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1. Within or Without the West?

Russia is in the midst of one of the most difficult periods in its history. For the first time in the past 200–300 years, it is facing a real danger of sliding to the second, and possibly even third, echelon of world states. We are running out of time to avoid this. [...] Nobody will do it for us. Everything depends on us and us alone (Putin 1999:219).

1.1 Introduction

The political leadership of the Russian Federation has played an inconsistent, if not unclear, role in the process of shaping the architecture of European security. The end of the Cold War introduced an era of politically unpredictable constellations in international security as leading world powers converted former patterns of enmity into bases for collaboration. In Europe, the most profound transformation took place on post-Soviet territory. Practically overnight, after the failed coup against Gorbachev, the Soviet superpower crumbled and an emerging Russia had to find its new place on the international arena. The central administration of the infant Russian Federation¹ had to cope with a floundering great power status, an economic recession, and a constant fear of mass social instability. Even if the days of superpower are over, there is still popular and political consensus that Russia must always remain a great power (Oldberg 2005:29). As a result, all aspects of domestic and foreign policies were continuously defined as security related. Consequently, the post-Cold War Russian debate on national interests emphasized the maintenance of international recognition through the protection of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, and economic development.

During the 1990s, Russian foreign policies ebbed and flowed between pro-Western and anti-Western approaches to international security. The Westernizers, also called Atlanticists, predominated Russian strategic thinking under Minister of Foreign

¹ Hereafter also referred to as Russia.

Affairs Kozyrev, who wanted to orient Russian diplomacy to Western Europe and the USA (Sergounin 2004:20). In 1996, the succeeding Minister of Foreign Affairs Primakov was particularly forthright when he stressed the need for a multipolar world. Primakov advocated a pan-European economic space and warned against American unilateralism. To all intents and purposes, such visions were ultimately based on Russia's fear of the USA as the unquestionable and only remaining superpower. Russia reached out to Western Europe in an attempt to establish power balance against the old archenemy. In this context, Vladimir Putin's first presidential term seemed like a shift away from this balancing act towards a pro-Western orientation (Polikanov and Timmins 2004).

The departure point for this thesis is the situation in 1999, often referred to as Russia's 'moment of truth' (D. Lynch 2003:11) and there are several reasons for this. First, the Russian people, together with the political administration, entered the new millennium both at a political and economic nadir and they aspired for a new political strategy. This was also the year when NATO intervened militarily in Kosovo, when Russia returned troops to Chechen territory, and when financial irregularities created a feverish public debate on Russian corruption². Of these three predicaments, the first and the second caused a revision of Russia's main policy concepts³, while the third provoked a massive distaste for Yeltsin's leadership. The new government was not intimidated from speaking of first-use of nuclear weapons (Godzimirski 2000:87), at the same time as they endorsed economic cooperation with the West. The appointed President Putin stressed that Russia had national interests "in the development of international cooperation on equal terms and to mutual benefit" (NSC 2000:2). He emphasized repeatedly that such interests "may be assured only on the basis of sustainable economic development" (NSC 2000:2). The overall message seemed to

² In September 2000, the World Bank released a report that singled out Russia among other CEEC, as countries where oligarchs and powerful private actors were establishing or strengthening monopolies by bribing judges, legislators and administrators (Synovitz 2000). See also World Bank Policy, Research Paper No 2444 (Hellman et al 2000:10).

³ These were the National Security Concept (NSC), the Military Doctrine (MD) and the Foreign Policy Concept (FPC) of the Russian Federation

be that Russia was ready to cooperate on equal terms but did not accept to be dictated in any ways (Zivanov 2000:17). Russia engaged in a strategic partnership with the West aimed to strengthen economic ties with Western Europe and to support a more independent role in international relations. Already in February 2000, acting President Putin hosted the formal visit of NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson. But most remarkable of the new strategic thinking was Putin's endorsement of US military bases in what has traditionally been Russia's sphere of influence. Whereas military officials opposed the new alignment (Reynolds 2001, Trenin and Lo 2005:4) some called it "revolutionary" (Medvedev 2004). Other again meant that President Putin had "ended centuries of wavering between East and West and made a strategic choice that the country's future lies unequivocally in Europe" (Gordon 2002).

1.2 Thesis Question

This thesis sets out to analyze Russia's relations with the West during Putin's first presidential period, and examine political motives that might have contributed to Russia's new type of engagement with the West between 1999 and 2004. This thesis will attempt to answer the following question: ***What were the dominant motives behind President Putin's choice of seeking strategic partnership with the West from 1999 – 2004?*** In this context, 'dominant motives' set out to portray prevalent national interests and the according proactive argumentation that Russia's leadership applied in strategy documents. 'Strategic partnership' points to the political will to cooperate in specific areas but without seeking membership. This theoretical concept relates to Russia's long term quest for national security and power balance in the multipolar system through cooperation with the West, and more specifically with the two Western organizations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). This question is important because research findings may shed light both on the alternatives and on the political priorities of the early Putin administration and on courses of action that were available. It may, moreover, add to an understanding of whether Russia's orientation towards the West was part of an

ideological strategy or a series of pragmatic solutions to vulnerabilities and opportunities.

The guiding assumption of this project is that the Russian President engaged in strategic partnerships with the West because traditional strategic thinking favoured great power status. Great power status had to be sustained in both the political-military and the economic sectors of foreign affairs. This point of view draws on the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and assumptions therein. The RSCT is a theoretical combination of Neo-Realist assumptions of power structure and territoriality, and of Constructivist interpretations of dynamics of securitization. It is furthermore a theoretical approach that studies the regional level of international interactions (Buzan and Wæver 2003). Essentially, dynamics of securitization in the international system will define a regional level of interdependent units (ibid.). RSCT also serves to assess options and consequences of the projection of influence in the international system (ibid.:47). The options that a state has for manoeuvring in the international system are shaped by the domestic and the international context. Domestic political disorder and political transition in general could render a state more war prone (Oliker and Charlick-Paley 2002:2-3). A weak state may therefore use violence as means of fostering internal unity (ibid.). Domestic vulnerabilities may cause impediments on economic progress or leave the state in dependency. Alignment between global powers could serve as means to achieve international recognition and preferred status.

1.3 Methodological Framework

Methodology

In this thesis, the analysis will be conducted as a case study with focus on Russian foreign policy vis-à-vis the West and Russian motivation for building strategic partnerships with the Western institutions, NATO and the EU. A case study is an intensive empirical investigation, in which the lines between the phenomenon

(Russian international strategies), and its context (political crisis), are uncertain (Yin 2003). When selecting a case the actors in question should have similar problems, the same type of actors should be involved, the actors should be organised in a similar manner, and the case in question should uphold similar significance to the surroundings at large (Andersen 2003:104). This particular case is Russian foreign policy priorities between the year 1999 and 2004. The question, moreover, is how strategic cooperation with the selected Western institutions was presented in Russian official discourse. The above criteria are fulfilled because NATO and the EU both aspire to increasingly include the Russian Federation into Western ideals of ruling, because they make up great power actors, and because they are both crucial for the maintenance of Russia's own great power ambitions. The unit in this case study is the Russian Federation under President Putin during his first period going from 1999 to 2004.

Henceforth, when this study examines Russia's national interests relative to two quite different security institutions, NATO and the EU, it must necessarily be based on an analysis of a complex matrix of dynamics. The study focuses, therefore, on an actor's perspective, on in-depth understanding of the case, and on the questions 'why' and 'how'. Finally, it sets out to develop causal effects (Andersen 2003).

In studies of International Relations, the methodological norm has been to apply the level of the nation state as the referent object of threat to security. This study will be based mostly on an analysis of political rhetoric and focus will be on official documents and statements. It is an inherent weakness therefore that "the relationship between a person's statements and his motives, personality, intentions, and the like, is at best only vaguely understood" (Holsti 1969:32). For that reason, this research cannot lead to one single answer but can, at best, synthesize the motives in relation to each other.

In order to answer this project's question, these documents and statements will be analyzed in the broader context of what is referred to as Russia's strategic thinking. The concept of strategic culture is useful here as it helps the researcher reduce

uncertainty in making predictions on strategic choice and subsequent behaviour. Strategic culture offers a set of limited options and ranked preferences in the decision making processes that persist over time and contexts (Johnston 1995:53). Or, the concept may serve as a lens that amends the appearance of different choices. More specifically, it is supposed to provide decision-makers with a set of choices, from which academics can derive predictions on strategic behaviour. One should, however, not study behaviour indiscriminately as a result of strategic culture (ibid.:45-46). As opposed to other researchers of strategic culture, Johnston (1995) concluded that one should not analyze strategic culture as if it were state particular. This analytical tool is helpful because it structures a larger context of events and discourses, and serves as a point of reference in security studies.

In the multipolar constellation of world power a new type of institutionalization surfaced. Strategic partnerships are loose forms of association that encompass more than cooperation, but less than membership. The strategic component in this type of partnership includes mutual terms of cooperation and “a common understanding of shared norms and human values” (Yilmaz 2007:3). Hence, the political foundation of a strategic partnership rests on the involved parties’ determination to reach beyond their differences in values and instead build on common interests and shared political goals. The concept bears great political precedence for a number of reasons.

According to theory of balance of power (Tsygichko in Heikka 2000:29), strategic stability in the international system could be maintained in one of three ways: parity, strategic partnership, or unipolar hegemony. Parity prevailed during the bipolar power system of the Cold War, whereas strategic partnerships among different poles would better maintain a power balance in the present multipolar system. Strategic partnerships may serve the actors instrumentally or they may function as mere rhetorical acts between two power seeking actors. For example, Russia will cooperate with the West and contribute to a ‘benign security environment’ as long as President Putin remains convinced that this is what Russia’s economic recovery requires (Goldman 2002:21). Furthermore, strategic partnerships are based on policy areas of common interests albeit sometimes only partly. For example, the Bush-Putin Summit

in May 2002 issued a Joint Declaration on the New Strategic Relationship that agreed on concrete areas of cooperation, while simultaneously identifying issues of divergence.

Strategic partnerships are often a combination of interest based *quid pro quo*-policies and efforts to create stabilising institutions in lack of norms in the post-bipolar era. And, as referred to above, the underlying policies in strategic partnerships are based on sober assessments of interests and limitations to other alternatives (Goldman 2002). In sum, security discourses and the according constellations of strategic partnerships are products of international structures in time as well as results of domestic or international struggles for power and understandings of the situation of the countries involved.

The concept of 'strategic partnership' has been centrally, albeit ambiguously, incorporated in Russia's dialogue with NATO and, particularly since 1999, with the European Union. Within the scope of this thesis, Russia's strategic partnership with the West has been limited actors to embody the central administration's dialogues with NATO and with the European Union. These two actors account for most European countries as well as North America. Although the Russian Federation is neither a member of NATO nor of the European Union, the agreements that nonetheless exist between them indicate the mutual post-Cold War interests in strengthening European integration in security and economic affairs. They are powerful because they shape national strategies and induce conformity to established conventions and norms. They may even amend national interests and the mandates that states have to act in international affairs. In general, security institutions "are designed to protect the territorial integrity of states from the adverse use of military force [and] to guard states' autonomy against the political effects of the threat of such force" (Wallander et al. 1998:1-2). The EU, however, does not originate from the same principle but sustains the potential for Russia's economic growth and expansion of the export market. As a result, NATO, together with the European Union, make up the most influential security actors on two continents. They incorporate two types of

security paradigms: a military institution with sharp end capabilities as laid out in NATO's Article 4 of international peace and security and Article 5 of collective defence, and a soft power institution with non-military sanctioning power through an open enlargement and positive integration policy.

What henceforth constitutes the current strategic partnership between the Russian Federation and the West includes agreements, top political summits, and practical cooperation in a number of issues, such as non-proliferation, crises management and economic affairs. The core agreements that subsequently, but not inevitably, led to Russia's cooperation with the West were above all the 1994 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU and the 1997 Founding Act with NATO. Strategic partnership in this case does not refer to future membership in any of the two institutions. Russia has neither applied nor released any plans to do so.

There are several challenges to the operationalization and application of 'strategic partnership' as a theoretical concept. Firstly, analytical problems arise because the term is extensively used to freely name a policy area of great diversity; namely, Russia's strategic cooperation with international partners. Secondly, the term alludes to such a loose institutionalisation of power that it barely sustains any political clout. Lastly, the term has obviously portrayed EU–Russian relations more frequently than NATO–Russia relations. However, despite the ambiguity encompassing this concept, applying 'strategic partnership' to the core of methodology allows for the inclusion of ideological values, such as cultural affinity, international compliance as well as pragmatic and even instrumentalist interests. Because of the different qualities of Russian activities with the West, this particular concept upholds the advantage of analyzing a wide range of relevant variables.

Limitation

In 2000, the three main official strategy documents were revised and reissued. These documents plus one speech have since been Russia's official guidelines in security policy. In order to carry out this project, the text material has been selected from

Putin's speech in 1999; "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium", from the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation (NSC), the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (FPC), and from the Russian Federation Military Doctrine (MD), all from the year 2000. External and domestic events had spurred the revision of the concepts. Essentially, the main causes were linked to Russia's severe economic recession, with further NATO enlargement into previous Soviet territory (particularly with the NATO intervention in Kosovo), and not least with the increased military confidence after Russia's intervention in Chechnya (Godzimirski 2000:73). The revision of the concepts owed also to the new Russian leadership. Together, this text material conveyed the platform of policies in the Russian administration after the momentous experiences of 1999 and served as a starting point for comparison over time.

These texts were compared with the President's Annual Addresses to the Federal Assembly (AA) between 2000 and 2004. The first Annual Address (2000) conveyed the sober message to the Russian population of what was needed to possibly overcome the economic and political crises. For the most part, this Address communicated the core threats to Russian national security and the measures by which to defend against them. Furthermore, an Annual Address could also be a forum for clarifying provisions and supplements to the Military Doctrine (MD 2000:3). It is important to keep in mind that the 2000 strategy documents were different in quality and in nature from the subsequent Annual Addresses. The former set was in depth ideological and political platforms for Russia's national interests in foreign and security policy, whereas the addresses were wrapped in more popular connotations, repetitions, and denoted more of a political character. The recipient groups were also dissimilar, because the Annual Addresses were delivered to the Federal Assembly with the general masses as an implicit and complementary target group. This thesis intends to examine two sets of texts. It will however not focus on their different structures but instead examine this content over the particular time period. Furthermore, they are all prepared by the President's Office and all of them cover the political areas of national interests.

Realistically, there is an indefinite number of variables at play in the official documents selected. The challenge is to keep optimal levels of validity and reliability. Whereas validity refers to systematic measurement errors, reliability points to random errors. By high validity is meant precise operationalization of concepts and variables. In qualitative research, moreover, validity is a question of personal understanding of the subject matter (Hellevik 1995:95), and much of the interpretation is left to the researcher's academic abilities. Inter-subjectivity is, for similar reasons, prone to jeopardize qualitative research. It is crucial to be explicit in terms of the operationalization of concepts and variables that are essential to this thesis. For example, when linked to individual and societal levels of analysis, there are practically no limits as to what the security concept is not. With a desire to achieve highest possible validity and reliability criteria, this current thesis is aware that "an abstract idea of 'security' is a non-analytical term bearing little relation to the concept of security implied by national or state security" (Wæver 1995:48). An all-inclusive security policy is therefore fruitless, if not altogether impossible.

Structure of Thesis

In order to pursue explanations along political and economic vulnerabilities and opportunities, the thesis question will be technically discussed in two sections. In the first one this thesis will focus on Russia's political position. The protection of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, and multipolarity and alignment are two territorial variables from the political discourse that may have evoked the need for strategic partnerships. Rightly, multipolarity and alignment are more ideologically based, but have most often been based in geo-political reasoning and are therefore measured as territorial. Second, an analysis of an economic variable examines whether strategic partnerships were guided by prospects of economic growth and integration. This split allows for an examination of two somewhat different discourses: the security focused one, and the economic one.

The applied independent variables, furthermore, define the main structure of the theoretical framework. The overarching intention is to assemble an assessment of the

applied variables. An end result of purely causal character is likely ideal and might not be feasible, because the motives are complex and a combination of several interests. In accordance with the theoretical foundation of this study, the following independent variables incorporate the main great power vulnerabilities and opportunities of the Russian Federation. A reason for this type of classification is to get an understanding of what impelled Russian government in their strategic thinking about the West.

The two first variables are in the applied theory defined as territorial, whereas the last is non-territorial. The omnipresent assumption is that Russia overtly wants to become a great power that is respected regionally and internationally. But this does not alone explain why Russia turned to the West. The methodological and theoretical framework should in concurrence help explain Russia's association with the West. Variable one, *state sovereignty and territorial integrity*, is operationalized to include Russia's restoration project, the preservation of the regime's status quo, and strategic stability within and around the federal borders. In foreign affairs this alluded to Russia's involvement in international decision making in the UN Security Council above all. Empirically, the central discussion revolves around the aftermath of NATO's intervention in Kosovo. The second variable, *multipolarity and alignment*, defines two security constellations and distribution of power in world affairs. The concept of multipolarity⁴ is interpreted and operationalized as an opportunity that the Russian political elite pragmatically supported in order to provide an alternative to a unipolar world. The relevant discussion will concentrate on the change in Russian strategic thinking away from balancing against the USA and to proactive alignment with the West. Variable three, *economic weakness*, takes into consideration the negative consequences of the financial crisis during the previous presidency and the resolute demand for economic integration. Putin entered his first presidency with a promise to reinsert Russia among the world's most affluent economies. Any mention

⁴ Multipolarity must be differentiated from another concept most commonly applied to economic relations; multilateralism. Closely related in the texts appear multilateralism and bilateralism, which concepts served to indicate the number of participants in specific matters.

in the text material of policies on building Russia's economic power is thus of analytical interest.

In order to achieve methodological consistency in this analysis, the international system of interactions will serve as the analytical level and this thesis will focus on Russia's official strategy documents as a basis for policies. This is because the global level is where Russia's great power ambitions enfold. The analysis is thus based exclusively on a qualitative study of the above mentioned documents signed and issued by the office of the Russian President.

Henceforth, the analytical unit is the Office of the President of the Russian Federation which is the formal leading institution of Russian policy making. President Putin may serve as the sole policy manufacturer, while the Foreign Ministry has the formal responsibility for coordination and implementation. Like his predecessor Yeltsin, President Putin also has the function of Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, and has direct control over foreign policy and security related ministries⁵. The President heads and appoints the Security Council, and oversees a presidential administration containing departments and advisers dealing with foreign policy (Webber and Smith 2002:151). Particularly in post-Soviet and Russian strategic culture, any modification of a country's relative power status is primarily a result of the personality of the state's political elite (Kokoshin 2002). For sure, Vladimir Putin reinstituted Russia's historical norm of strong leadership, which had been set aside during Yeltsin (Trenin and Lo 2005:9).

This thesis draws upon post-Cold War security literature of the Copenhagen School and more specifically upon Regional Security Complex Theory from 2003. Authors Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003) set out the applied portion of the theoretical framework, whereas the constructivist component is set out by both Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde, and Ole Wæver and (1998) and Ronnie D. Lipschutz (1995). Set in

⁵ These are, above all, the Foreign and Defence Ministries, and the Foreign and Intelligence Federal Border Services

the context of relevant academic literature, Regional Security Complex Theory is a contrast to Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, and an addition to Wendt's constructivist approach (Buzan and Wæver 2003:41). This thesis also draws on academic research by experts on Russian affairs. These are mainly Henrikki Heikka (2000), Alastair Iain Johnston (1995) and Iver B. Neumann (2005) on strategic thinking, Alexander A. Sergounin (2004) on Russian international relations theories, Dov Lynch (2003) on Russian relations with Europe, and Allen C. Lynch (2002) on economic aspects.

In sum, this section has elaborated on the concept of strategic partnership, which is a loose form of institution building in a multipolar security constellation. This type of partnership is based on interests more than on values in common, and the Russian main national interest in the period in question was to remain a great power. A qualitative text analysis will lead the main discussion to an appropriate conclusion on motivation. The ensuing discussion will summarize some particularly important moments in post-Soviet history that have shaped Russian strategic thinking. This study will then turn to a consideration of the theoretical perspectives, followed by the main discussion of text material. Finally, this study will offer some conclusions about the dominant motives behind Putin's strategic partnership with the West.

2. Decisive Moments in Russian Strategic Thinking

Russia was and will remain a great power. It is preconditioned by the inseparable characteristics of its geopolitical, economic, and cultural existence. [...] For Russians, a strong state is not an anomaly to be gotten rid of. Quite the contrary, it is a source of order and main driving force of any change (Putin 1999: 214).

2.1 Russian Grand Strategy

This chapter attempts to demonstrate the particular moments in post-Soviet history that have shaped Russian strategic thinking under President Putin. The focus will be on political, military and economic crises in which the young federation found itself in the decade from the dissolution of the Soviet Union leading up when President Putin was appointed. The critical point arrived when NATO intervened in Kosovo.

By definition, a grand strategy is the state's collection of political and military means and ends with which to achieve national security (Posen 1984 in Neumann and Heikka 2005:12). A grand strategy is the state's theory of how it can best protect national security. The strategy should explain what threats exist and why the applied means are appropriate (ibid.). Russia's grand strategy as laid out in the National Security Concept of 2000 aims in more detail to ensure the "security of the individual, society and state against external and internal threats in any aspects of life and activity" (NSC 2000:1). Since the beginning of the Russian state in the ninth century, the country's grand strategy has been characterized by imperialist expansionism (Buzan and Wæver 2003:398). Traditionally, Russian grand strategy has been a set of clear trends that may be described as a "drive to the West", a "drive to the sea" or as a "drive to the Middle East oil fields" (Heikka 2000:4). For example, a "preference for pre-emptive, offensive uses of force that was deeply rooted in Russia's history of external expansionism and internal autocracy" characterised Soviet strategic thinking (Johnston 1995:1). The bipolar arms race shaped political and military strategies. In the post-Soviet period, on the contrary, Russian grand

strategies have been less rigid and more pronounced on respecting international norms. Russian grand strategy during the 1990s was characterised by a general agreement to soften the focus on military power and increase cooperation with European counterparts. Sergounin made a thorough distinction along the dividing lines of liberalism from the Atlanticists / Westernizers, Eurasianists, Realists, Neo-Marxists, in addition to Russian Post-Modernists (Sergounin 2004). Broadly speaking, there were two main groups of grand strategy proposals: the political realists versus those who continued to advocate for communism. As a result, the strategic debate came to revolve around the concept of multipolarity (Heikka 2000:25). Webber and Smith confirmed that “official statements from the Russian leadership after 1992 bear witness of a new Russia who turned away from her previous policy of ‘Atlanticism’ and took an asserted stand in support of ‘Multipolarism’” albeit limited in scope and effect (Webber and Smith 2002:159).

Without abandoning multipolarity explicitly, Russia engaged concomitantly in special bilateral relations with major European partners, such as France and Germany under Yeltsin, together with the UK under Putin (Baranovsky 2000:454).

Furthermore, in 2003 the Russian administration decided to supply the US and allied forces in Afghanistan with humanitarian support. This was an unprecedented act and signalled a shifting strategy in favour of making pro-American international cooperation efforts more important in Russian security affairs (D. Lynch 2003:11).

When the extent of political impulsiveness is taken into consideration, then a study of grand strategy is particularly difficult in a country like Russia. “The record of post-Cold War Russian foreign policy is so full of reckless moves and unpredictable u-turns, that it seems rather far-fetched to suggest that there could be, even in theory, a common logic behind it” (Heikka 2000:3). Hence, grand strategy is, in content, much more loosely defined compared to the more concrete geo-strategic impressive plans of imperialism. According to Heikka again, the official policy concepts and doctrines spell out Russia’s vow to multipolarity as a balancing act against US hegemony.

Even if it were only a vague political strategy, it would still be a component adding to Russian grand strategy at large.

Formation Years

In December 1991, during the first meeting of the newly established North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)⁶, the Soviet ambassador was informed that the USSR had dissolved and that he, for the latter part of the meeting, represented only the Russian Federation (NATO 2005:4). The founding enemy had disappeared and NATO was, *ipso facto*, expected to do the same.

To the contrary, NATO instead initiated security cooperation across the previous East-West divide and managed a simultaneous twofold enlargement. That involved both increasing the number of member states⁷ as well as extending the core tasks from purely defence matters to peacekeeping and crisis management in support of the UN and the OSCE. The New Strategic Concept of 1990 had already issued positive changes in a new security environment, e.g. state sovereignty to former Soviet satellites, full membership to an integrated Germany, and a lowered arms level. As a result of continuous reformation, in 1994 NATO launched the Partnership for Peace (PfP), which defined new ways of practical bilateral cooperation between NATO and individual countries, including Russia (NATO 2005:5). The formal acceptance in 1995 of NATO admitting new members from the CEEC immediately disturbed Russia's political administration. Inability to influence the economic and legal structure of the international system was a *de facto* threat to Russia's national security (Kassianova 2001:833).

Despite NATO's attempts to facilitate enlargement without alarming Russia (Sakwa 1996:134), the Russian government was provoked regardless and exclaimed that "NATO expansion would mean the return of the 'flames of war' to Europe" (A. Lynch 2002:169). NATO enlargement infringed upon Russia's special status as a

6 NATO's Heads of State and Government implemented in 1991 the NACC as a step towards operational transformation of NATO, this council changed in 1997 name to the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)

7 NATO admitted 10 new members in two swift rounds; the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in 1999, and Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia in 2004.

nuclear power because NATO presence on post-Soviet soil was perceived as Western control and mobilization in Russia's backyard. To complicate matters, other flames of war had arisen within the Russian Federation's territory.

In 1991, along with former USSR member states, the Chechen Republic of North Caucasus declared independence. This claim was denied by the Russian Federation. While the Kremlin discussed alternatives for Chechen devolution, it never intended on extending full sovereignty, whereas Chechnya aimed for CIS membership (Trenin 2001:185). In Chechnya, the self proclaimed Commander in Chief imposed Sharia law and declared a 'Holy War' on Russia (Panico 1997:7). Chechen secessionism was once a popular movement but developed into an increasingly militarist group with political in-fights. The situation in the south was out of control and became unbearable for the Russian administration. In December 1994, Yeltsin ordered Russian military forces to Grozny and planned for a swift victory. One year and eight months later, in August 1996, Russian troops were defeated and the two sides signed a cease-fire agreement that postponed further decisions. This operation came with many costs and clearly demonstrated that Russian military was in a state of crisis. President Yeltsin's popular support plummeted, the national economy drained, and international support was withdrawn. The Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) severely criticised the Russian use of disproportionate force in Chechnya.

Before Russia's second war in Chechnya from 1999 to 2000, Chechnya had descended into anarchy. The economy had collapsed and kidnapping for ransom had become an important income for warlords. For Russia, the fighting was intense and devastating to the forces' morale. Russian soldiers, it was told, were trading their ammunition for narcotics whereas Chechens were buying guns from the Russians (Oliker 2001:50). When on March 1999 the elected Chechen president dissolved the parliament, the situation intensified (Bowker 2004:260). However, it took some convincing conspiracy theories, a Chechen invasion into Dagestan, and a series of terrorist atrocities before the Russian administration decided to intervene militarily

again in the secessionist republic of Chechnya⁸. As opposed to the previous war, the 1999 Russian intervention in Chechnya was a well planned political strategy that increased the popularity of the acting President Putin. It also offered a long sought after solution to the spread of Chechen terrorism into the Russian Federation. The second war did not end up in an acceptable solution to any of the parts, and the continuation of terrorist acts in the Russian Federation illustrates the significance of territorial integrity.

2.2 Finacial and Political Crises

Economic Vulnerabilities

In addition to the military drain in Chechnya during the late 1990s, the Russian state was on the brink of bankruptcy. Great financial difficulties followed when Yeltsin was challenged to turn a planned economy into a market economy. During the first two years of the Russian Federation, consumer prices had increased by 2509 percent! And they continued to rise another 840 percent in 1993 (Cooper 2003:7). Accordingly, in 2000 the real GDP⁹ was less than 80 percent of what it had been in 1992 (ibid.). In order to better assist this transfer, President Yeltsin decided in January 1992 on a ‘shock therapy’ that was comprised of three elements: liberalisation, stabilisation, and privatisation of the Russian economy. Liberalisation, in this case, meant discharging heavy subsidies and resulted in a 350 percent higher prices on food and basic commodities in the following month (Waller 2005:193). The IMF, therefore, enforced economic stability. Subsequently, the State Bank started to give out credit to enterprises and to the government, which in turn meant printing new money followed, not unexpectedly, by inflation. Hence, on 13 August 1998, the rouble was devaluated by two thirds. Lastly, privatisation meant selling state owned

⁸ On the considerable numbers of casualties, see Oliker 2001:50, Bowker 2004:265, and Cornell 2003:20.

⁹ Real GDP is adjusted for inflation.

property and thereby giving the population possibilities to invest in real estate and enterprises. The pitfall, however, was that the workers and managers bought shares in their employing enterprises at such low prices that the state was left with little to no income from these transactions (Waller 2005:193-4). Effectively, the financial depression that hit Russia between 1990 and 1998 struck much harder than the depression of the 1930s in the capitalist world (A. Lynch 2002:32). Developing relations with the European market was pivotal to Russia's economic recovery.

Of course, relations with an expanding European Union were not less complex than those Russia had with NATO. After two years of difficult trade negotiations, Russia and the European Union had agreed in June of 1994 to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Although this agreement did not enter into force until 1997¹⁰, it was an ambitious element of promoting trade relations. Most importantly, the PCA aimed at strengthening political and economic freedoms, supporting Russia's transition to democracy, and providing a framework for gradual integration between Russia and Europe. Furthermore, the PCA also aspired to establish a free trade area between Member States and Russia in a later stage of the cooperation process. Some have argued that the PCA arranged for a more formal and less practical cooperation institution. A former British Ambassador said in 1999 that "the practical results of the PCA have been disappointing". He referred then to a discontent that may have stemmed from the tendency of Russia wanting to control the speed of reform as well as to protect certain sectors of the economy (D. Lynch 2003:56). Subsequently in the 1999 Common Strategy on Russia (CSR), the EU launched its first complete vision of relations with a third party. The document was based on the PCA but defined its terms of cooperation more clearly.

¹⁰ This was due to the on-going Chechen war.

International Relations

Not only did it stir negative and anti-western sentiment in the Russian public, the NATO intervention against the former Russian ally in Kosovo provoked Russia to cancel, albeit only briefly, a number of crucial international treaties¹¹. Undoubtedly, the intervention had a devastating impact on Russia's great power status and a calamitous effect on all Russian international relations. First of all, it may have caused the redirection of Russia's foreign policy. Next, it set a new standard in international law. Russia's sharpest non-military tools in international decision-making, i.e. the UN Charter, were literally cut off. Russian veto in the UN Security Council, although legally binding and thus sufficient to stop NATO from imposing power, did not constrain NATO headquarters. The UN had landed on four resolutions¹² that were acceptable also to the Russian position in the Security Council. This political elimination of Russia from decision making power was particularly devastating when added to the loss of military capabilities. Russian armed forces, which once claimed superpower status, could not even compare with NATO's procurements and mobility. The Russian military budget had been reduced by 50 per cent during the three years from 1997 to 1999, and, in 2000, the Russian defence budget was 2 percent of that of the US (Arbatov 2000:5-6). The deficit in capabilities combined with the political impasse forced the Russian administration to reconsider its foreign policy.

What was at stake, according to Alexei G. Arbatov, was the pre-eminence of law over arbitrary use of force. The outcome would eventually "determine whether Russia and NATO have either a cooperative or confrontational relationship at the level of maintaining both regional and global security" (Arbatov in Smith 1999:10-11). Furthermore, "Western employment of large-scale forces in the Balkans lifted the taboo against the use of military force as an instrument for resolving ethnic problems

¹¹ Start III, CTBT and the Open Skies Treaty were postponed and cancelled but ratified shortly after (Arbatov 2000:26-28).

¹² The UN Security Council had during 1998 and 1999 agreed in four resolutions the peaceful settlement of the escalating humanitarian crisis in Kosovo. Finally the UN applied Chapter VII and determined that there was a threat to international peace and security but urged for a political solution through dialogue.

and conflicts that had been in place since the end of the first Chechen war” (Arbatov 2000:2). The Kosovo intervention strengthened Russia’s perception of NATO as an immediate threat to national security, and brought Russia’s political ambitions closer to the European Union. All in all, Russia was left in political isolation primarily because the USA once again looked upon Russia as the ‘problem’ more than as a partner in international cooperation.

Russia’s international orientation may, thus far, be summed up in three broad periods of time. From 1991 to 1993, President Yeltsin did his utmost to please the West, but insisted secondly on the country’s great power tradition even if it jeopardized international good will. And third, from 2001 and onwards, President Putin actively engaged with the West both politically and economically, and even partnered with the US led War against Terrorism.

Kokoshin (2002) argued that only the states that were “free to independently determine domestic, foreign and defence policies, enter into unions and leave them, form strategic partnerships or stay away from them” uphold real sovereignty. Interpreting his view literally might not include any national government in the 21st century although most countries certainly claim sovereignty. But a broader understanding of the quote allows for a nuanced analysis. At the core of this thesis question is the discussion of whether Russian President Putin was independently engaging in strategic cooperation with the West or motivated by the vulnerabilities and opportunities in the wake of NATO’s military supremacy, secessionist uprising, and of economic collapse. This current thesis argues that Russia, at the end of the 1990s, could not manoeuvre with full sovereignty in international relations. This was because a growing foreign debt and apparent isolation from high political decision making had made negative impacts on Russian foreign policies.

Up until he was appointed Prime Minister in August 1999, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin was an unknown national political figure. And only four months later was he placed at the top of Russian politics and was nominated president. On 26 March 2000, Putin won the presidential elections with over 52 percent of the votes in the

first round. This rapid event helped Putin create a public image as a young and outstanding administrator in Russian political history. Media outlets described him as different from all previous Russian presidents, because he knew how to achieve his clear political goals. He was the “man who could get things done” (Herspring 2005:2). His areas of focus were a stronger state, the condemnation of oligarchs’ political influence, and attempts to gain access to Western policy makers. The Western powers, furthermore, perceived Putin as a ‘normal’ state leader “with whom the West could ‘do business’”¹³ (Lo 2003:1).

President Putin was an outspoken pragmatist and affiliated with no particular ideology. According to Fedorov’s typology, pragmatism was based on the premise that affluent democracies of the world were positioning themselves with the most advanced forms of economic and military power (Fedorov 2006:3). In this view, if Russia was to avoid being forced to the periphery of international relations, it would have to associate with the community of democracies. Putin’s school of thought, then, presumed the threats to the Russian Federation to be identical to those threats undermining the West; namely domestic instabilities, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and a set of soft threats (ibid., Putin 1999:210). President Putin was particularly committed to bureaucratic efficiency and to the tightening of the vertical power structure or a “dictatorship of law” (Putin 2000:7) as he called it. Putin somewhat confirmed a Russian tradition of political absolutism. For this reason, it is possible to analyze Russia’s international orientation as the sole work of President Putin.

During Putin’s first period in office, Russian relations with NATO and the EU were strengthened. The NATO – Russia Council was established in 2002 in Rome and has since formally institutionalized increasing strategic cooperation between the two. The forms of cooperation have included support in the war against international terrorism, crises resolutions, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and cooperation

¹³ This was originally Margaret Thatcher’s description of Gorbachev, but it has been applied to Putin on several occasions.

in civil emergencies (Voronin 2005). It is, above all, the practical level of the partnership that stands out (*ibid.*). Russian dialogue with the EU included facilitation for the modernization and integration of the Russian economy, conflict resolution, and non-proliferation (European Commission 2007). The structure of this relationship is based on the 1997 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which has above all led to heavy trade relations. The Russian economic growth and increased export of raw materials to the EU has resulted in a highly asymmetrical economic relationship, upon which Russia has grown increasingly dependent.

While Russia improved her position relative to NATO and the EU, the domestic situation was continually difficult. President Putin's main tool against internal threats to national security was the construction of a strong state. As mentioned above, Chechen secessionism had particularly in the second war become militarily radicalized and terrorist. The Russian population had become civilian target of many terrorist acts. The most widely known tragedies were the hostage taking in 2002 at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow, the suicide attack in 2003 at an open-air concert also in Moscow, and the hostage taking in 2004 at the School Number One in Beslan in North Ossetia that killed more than 300 pupils and teachers. Terrorism had unfortunately been part of every day life in Russia and especially for Muscovites. And since the first war in Chechnya in 1994, terrorism was part of Russia's Criminal Code (Stepanova 2005:303).

In sum, this outline of pivotal moments has shown that the Russian Federation experienced dire political and economic crises at the end of its first decade as an independent country. The post-Soviet legacy, President Yeltsin's economic mismanagement, and political secessionism had weakened Russia's status internationally. Hence, when NATO in 1999 decided to ignore Russian interests in Kosovo then President Putin had to make a strategic choice. His reforms included bureaucratic efficiency, pragmatic management of politics, and a cooperative international profile.

3. Theoretical Perspectives

3.1 Introduction

During the Cold War, a global balance of power shaped international security and established in security studies the theory of military deterrence. In international relations, the end of the Cold War was the most momentous event since the Second World War. Security studies went from being a distinct sub-field to emerging into the mainstream of international politics. As a result, most theoretical assumptions in security studies were dismissed globally as irrelevant in predicting the international distribution of power. Military power had suddenly become just one of many. There is substantial agreement in academic literature that the system structure of international security constellation is no longer bipolar. However, consensus has been weak on a description of the post-bipolar system. In post-Soviet Russia, the scholars who used to study international security through the lenses of *realpolitik* and zero sum games had to fill the post-Marxist theoretical vacuum (Sergounin 2004:19) and invent new analytical devices to cope with new conceptual and practical challenges caused by transition to market economy and democracy and new rule of international norms.

The theoretical foundation of this current thesis will draw on assumptions in international security after the end of the Cold War. Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) offers an intricate theoretical framework beyond a type of polarity that is merely based in material power, military procurements and capabilities. Instead, the RSCT proposes a holistic conceptualization of the global distribution of power and power potential. Applied to this thesis question, the RSCT helps to identify and assess the interactions and dynamics that shape Russia's securitization of vulnerabilities and opportunities in foreign affairs.

3.2 The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)

Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver established a framework for international security analyses that emphasized relative autonomy of the regional level in a strong international system. ‘Strong international system’ refers here to the characteristics of globalization, e.g. intensified interaction capacities in communication, a new sense of time and space, and the increasing imposition of the systemic on the local (Buzan and Wæver 2003:24-25). Adding a regional level of analysis to studies of non-bipolar security structures allowed for a theoretical combination of neo-realism and constructivism.

Theoretically, the Regional Security Complex Theory is complimentary to Neo-Realism, because of a shared emphasis on the power structure and the territorial dimension of international security. RSCT agrees with Neo-Realism on the description of a system structure but argues contrarily that the most appropriate level of analysis is not the global level but a regional. The regional level is crucial for global powers because it forms the options for and consequences of global powers’ projection of influences (Buzan and Wæver 2003:47) and because Russia is considered a great power, the regional and the global levels merge. Therefore the appropriate level to study interaction between global powers is henceforth the global level. The global level of security is, according to RSCT, made up by one superpower (the USA) plus four great powers (Britain/France/Germany-EU, Japan, China and Russia). This one-plus-four system characterizes the global level of polarity and the line between this level of global powers and the next “defines the difference between global and regional security dynamics” (ibid.:34). Analytically, the Baltic States draws the line of separation between the two European RSCs; the EU-Europe and its ‘near abroad’, and the post-Soviet space. In the 2003 edition of RSCT it remains a theoretical possibility that these two European RSCs are not yet sufficiently involved in each others security issues to turn Europe into one single analytical domain. However, the 2004 accession of the Baltic States into the EU is moving the political borders but not necessarily the borders related to security issues. Except for the EU-

Europe complex, which does not distinguish between local, regional and global levels, RSCs do not have actor qualities but serve only analytical purposes. This current thesis aims to discuss security dynamics between global powers and is therefore preoccupied mostly on the global level of analysis.

When studying global security interactions, it becomes apparent that the global level is a function of regions that are composed of geographically clustered sets of state units theoretically labelled Regional Security Complexes (RSCs). In definition, such a Regional Security Complex, or an RSC, is “a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan and Wæver 2003:44). Other things being equal, an RSC is therefore a group of states that possess sufficient security interdependence to both link the states together and to differentiate them from other clusters (ibid.:47-48). At the core of this perspective is the idea that processes of securitization and desecuritization in the international system will manifest themselves in regional clusters. Finally, the RSCT argues that all security interactions are dependent on the social construction of dynamics at the regional level and is therefore fundamentally a constructivist theorem.

RSCT builds on the strengths from constructivism under the assumption that state identity is a dependent variable that is determined by the historical, cultural, social and political context (Lomagin 2005:257). Security is accordingly a dynamic condition that is closely tied to the political processes of states. An issue can be defined as being a security relevant problem by the act of securitization. Reasons for making something a security issue are inter-subjective and socially constructed (Buzan et al. 1998:31). When an issue is termed a security problem then the political process of moving this particular issue beyond normal politics is the act of securitization. Securitization is thus the more extreme version of politicization. The securitized issues develop and arise largely from discursive practices within the state and secondarily between states (Lipschutz 1995:9). It is therefore an act of speech between the state administration and both the domestic and the international public.

The result may be a security policy that encompasses both the security problem in addition to some measures taken in response. Dynamics of securitization are continually reshaping RSCs. The “formation and operation of the RSCs hinge on patterns of amity and enmity among the units in the system, which makes regional systems dependent on the actions and interpretations of actors, not just the distribution of power” (Buzan and Wæver 2003:40). Security policies are the result of interpretations of threat in a complex web of interaction.

Security policies aim to defend values that are considered crucial for survival, and comprise much more than the mere defence against potential military threats against the state or the military defence of such values. Measures of national security, or security policies, have been associated with military capabilities but increasingly also with vital issues related to the economy, ideology and with the access to natural resources. According to Kjølberg and Jeppesen, there might be two reasons for this broadening of the security concept. New issues were added into the security concept either because they had indirectly downgraded military capabilities or affected the military’s intentions to use force. Or, the added aspects have been directly security related as political, ideological and economic essential values that are considered fundamental to any state, nation or society. Issues that political realists previously used to portray as objective and tangible concerns were by the proponents of this approach defined as security relevant only when they were perceived as threatening or disturbingly ambiguous (Kjølberg and Jeppesen 2001:18). Hence, it has become less interesting whether threats are imagined, simulated, or tangible because “their ultimate consequences are all too real” (Lipschutz 1995:8). Threats are above all based in perceptions or interpretations, and cannot for that reason be measured in terms of the phenomenon’s objective existence (Kjølberg and Jeppesen 2001:18). This is why a security concept must be extended to analytically account for much more than the mere level of material power and strategic capabilities.

The very act of securitization, therefore, is the act of labelling something a security issue. By doing so, the securitizing actor claims a right to use extraordinary means or

break normal rules. “Since a question of survival necessarily involves a point of no return at which it will be too late to act, it is not defensible to leave this issue to normal politics”. The securitization of any referent objects within the close vicinity of one RSC is of security concerns to any of the other RSCs. The analytical question is not whether or not the issue in itself is a threat *per se*, but “when and under what conditions who securitises what issue”. It is in this political process of the securitization; i.e. labelling something a threat, that distinct security dynamics originate” (Buzan and Wæver 2003:71). In sum, political threats relate to the give or deny of recognition and legitimacy (Buzan et al. 1998:142). Therefore, the degree of political attention uttered in words and diplomatic acts serves as a measure of the current threat picture. Language theory may explain security as an act of speech because an issue becomes a security problem only when the state elite declares it as such. “By uttering ‘security’, a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it” (Wæver 1995:55). Securitization is therefore the political process of gaining popular acceptance for moving a case out of regular procedures and into a practice of priority based on the weight of the argument.

RSCT helps understand the nature of President Putin acts of securitization as they are communicated in the selected text material. This thesis will examine the dynamics of securitization and not be limited to the issues that have been successfully securitized. In order to understand what issues have been attempted securitized in the Russian public debate this thesis will analyse several official documents and statements but will not deal with the public response to these securitization attempts. This study will focus on how the relationship with NATO and the EU has been presented in official statements and not so much on the public reading of this relationship.

Applied RSCT

The main variables of the RSCT, by which an RSC is described, are territorial boundary (e.g. geographical proximity), anarchic structure, polarity, and social

construction (e.g. relations of enmity and amity). “Anarchy plus the distance effect plus geographical diversity yields a pattern of regionally based clusters, where security interdependence is markedly more intense between the states inside such complexes than between states inside the complex, and those outside it” (Buzan and Wæver 2003:46). RSCs are the results of power systems to counterbalance anarchic structures, and of pressures from geographical proximity (ibid.:45). The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) illustrates such alliance building in counterweight to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Of course, geographical proximity tends to generate more security interaction between neighbours since conflict travels more easily over shorter distances. The impact of geographical distance on security, however, is strongest in military and political sectors and less significant in the economic sector (Buzan et al. 1998). This matrix of interactions makes up a security constellation of four levels of interactions.

RSCT describes the dynamics of securitization within and between RSCs in four levels of analysis, which corresponds to levels of interaction that are simultaneously at play. The domestic level studies the internally generated vulnerabilities within the state. This could be done by asking questions of state stability and of what security fears the state bears. The second level, the inter-state, is important because it established the RSC as such, but this level has less variation and is consequently of less interest to this particular study. The third level, regional interaction between RSCs, should be analyzed parallel to the fourth level, the interplay among the security actors on the global level. These four levels of interaction and analysis constitute the “security constellation” (Buzan and Wæver 2003:51).

Whether or not a specific RSC is centred or standard is not fixed in theory but through empirical studies. Empirically, the post-Soviet RSC upholds a unipolar structure centred on the great power of the Russian Federation. This particular complex has been structured by long-term patterns of growth and contraction in the Russian Empire, and by the region’s varying attachment to other regions, primarily Europe (Buzan and Wæver 2003:397). The post-Soviet RSC and the EU-Europe RSC

convey different agendas of values and interests. RSCT deals with the interplay between types of states (e.g. modernist and internally more cohesive, versus post-modernist states with less focus on empirical sovereignty), and security dynamics between weak and strong states. Strong states in this context refer to the “degree of socio-political cohesion between civil society and the institutions of government” (ibid.:22). Russia is a strong and modernist state, which represents the classical Westphalian type of state. These states are defined by strict government control and restrictive attitudes towards openness in society. Modernist states, such as Russia, “see themselves as independent and self-reliant entities, having distinctive national cultures and development policies, and often pursuing mercantilist economic policies. Their borders mark real lines of closure against outside economic, political, and cultural influences, and their sovereignty is sacrosanct” (ibid.:22-23). The modernist state upholds a securitization of the traditional agenda of threats such as state sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic productivity. The USA is also considered a modernist state because of its high level of conflict formation on the global level.

The Western European countries are also strong states but have moved away from the Westphalian characteristics. They correspond to a post-modernist type of state and are found mainly among the capitalist economic powers. Post-modernist states are not driven by traditional military concerns about armed invasions but define instead the world’s economic centre. All in all, they strongly project the values of openness into the international system (Buzan and Wæver 2003:23-24). The EU-Europe RSC is perceived as a security community, in which the members cannot even imagine resorting to violent ways of pursuing their goals, and a war between them is ruled out as a way of settling their disputes (Adler and Barnett 1998). As opposed to the post-Soviet RSC, this is a desecuritized region albeit not entirely. Actually, the integration process is in part the securitization of the fear of a return a fragmented Europe of the past (Buzan and Wæver 2003:57).

All types of states have their security agendas shaped by the regional and international context. The states are furthermore conditioned by the essential structure of regional dynamics in which they find themselves, and are therefore affected by the international security environment in different ways. Hence, all states operate in the global system of security but the main variables predispose states to interact differently. Security interactions on the regional level are durable and self-contained so that socially constructed patterns of enmity and amity would exist regardless of interference from the global level. This is to say that global dominance on the regional level may support, but not entirely generate regional security interactions (Buzan and Wæver 2003:47). The link between the global level and the regional level dynamics is one of penetration. Penetration is when an external actor engages in a security alliance within another RSC. This may result in regional rivalry and may be motivated by agreement or disagreement on the global level. The US bases in Uzbekistan for military and humanitarian intervention in Afghanistan may serve as an example, although Russia respected the alignment and did not officially call this superpower penetration. Processes of globalisation thus represent two apparently contradictory trends, namely exclusion and inclusion (ibid.:25). Modernist states situated along the borders of post-modernist states often face particular dilemmas in the border areas that may end up as split societies. Exclusion often means the denial of the benefits of membership. The threat of inclusion, on the other hand, demonstrates the predicament of regime and cultural preservation versus foreign influence. Inside Russia this tension comes into play in the ideological discourse between the Westernizers and the Eurasianists (Neumann in Buzan and Wæver 2003:25). The price for enjoying economic and political relations with the post-modernist affluent countries is the demand for democracy and respect for human rights. Modernist states may perceive such foreign prerequisites as an assault on both their sovereignty and state identity.

Post-Cold War security is a complex security constellation because it exhibits an infinite number of interactions. Additionally, the security concept is itself subject to renewal. Some may argue that in the future all securitizing dynamics will be

concentrated in specified sectors of either military or economy, but RSCT calls for a synthesis. A “securitisation of an economic threat will tend either to push down a competing military threat construction or to link to it and draw energy from the same threat appearing in several sectors” (Buzan and Wæver 2003:76). This captures more of the complexity with which real world interaction operates. For example, Russia has problems with demographic decline, with political secessionism, as well as with economic disadvantages. All in all, the analytical interest lies in the possibility of identifying the securitization of certain issues and determining the context in which they are located.

What then is economic security compared to military-political security? Economic security is a much more blurry conception than military security, for example, but more tangible than political security. As opposed to military deterrence theory, the international economic system is characterised as a non-zero-sum game. The international economy is an interdependent game, in which one state’s economic growth does not necessarily inflict decline upon the rest. Economic security is therefore not so much based on historical enmity – amity relations as it is part of a recent and relatively open competition. According to the RSCT, economic security is based on mechanisms of two systems that both are anarchic in nature. These are the mechanisms in the international political system, on the one hand, and those that operate in the international market economy, on the other. The West’s victory in the Cold War marginalized but did not eliminate the economic nationalist element. Liberalism is the dominant mechanism in the international economy with one result being interdependence within the capitalistic system and increased competition between countries. Advocates of liberalism opposed the state’s interference with economic forces because their main objective was to create product and factor mobility among national economies, such as the international movement of labour, capital and production. The consequences of increased integration in production, trade and finance have made national economies in the low end more vulnerable to global fluctuations. Economic instability created conditions of exploitation of oil dependency, and the highly discriminating trade supply of raw materials from the

third world. This was of great concern to Russia because the effects were deindustrialization which posed a threat to both welfare and sovereignty (Buzan et al. 1998:97). The economically weak Russia grew dependent on Western markets, which was obviously a disadvantage, and became a losing player in the international political economy. Hence, Russia securitized all aspects of territorial and economic security that were significant to its power in international relations.

3.3 Main Features of the Post-Soviet RSC

The concept of Great Power

The concept of great power status stands out in Russian security policy “as a unifying formula for the conduct of affairs” (Neumann 2005:13). Great power status is an expression based in part on Russia’s uniqueness and capabilities on the international arena and in part on the consolidating mechanisms in her culture and geopolitics. According to RSCT, great power status differs from regional power qualities because other actors respond to them about the present and near-future distribution of power. A “great power is treated in the calculations of other major powers as if it has the clear economic, military, and political potential to bid for superpower status in the short or medium term” (Buzan and Wæver 2003:35). Russia qualifies for great power status because of her recent exit from superpower status. It is the presupposition of this current thesis that Russia was on the brink of losing great power qualities in the late 1990s due to the deep economic, military, and political crises. In this period, Russia struggled with being internationally recognized as an irreplaceable partner in world affairs. The key problem of Russia’s self-appointment was that only the communities with particular interests really cared what Russia did (Neumann 2005:15). And it would be impossible for a large state to be a great power if it were ignored by the international community. “In order to be great you need the recognition of others, and in order to be recognized you need to be noticed and thought of on a regular basis” (ibid.). To be a great power was accordingly to be present when absent and to have a *droit de regard*. It was, however, Russia’s

enormous economic potential that turned this vulnerable situation into one of opportunity and made the two dominating powers, Europe and the USA, more dependent on Russia.

This being said, Western geo-economics and geo-politics have inspired President Putin in his strategy of turning the Russian Federation into a normal great power. Whereas Kozyrev pursued an integrationist policy and Primakov his policy of great power balancing against the USA, the pragmatic President Putin advocated strategies of great power normalization. In other words, he pursued the objectives of moving away from Soviet style isolationism and sought to turn Russia into a fully fledged member of the international community. “Instead of capitalizing on the threat posed by unipolarity [...] Putin drew attention to the world’s instabilities, such as terrorism, as well as some new economic opportunities” (Tsygankov 2005:133). Falling behind in economic development and terrorism were in effect the key threats for Putin, not the one emanating from the USA (ibid.:133-138). The label ‘normal’ in this context refers without exception to Russia’s renewed focus on economic liberalism. Lo and Trenin draw due attention to the usage of this label and argue that this ‘normality’ does not imply subscribing to Western norms and ideals (Trenin and Lo 2005:8). Rather, being a normal great power means to accept and behave by the rules of engagement in the pursuit of concrete goals. Russia as a great power means that the possibility of cooperation exists and that there is nothing in this process that “suggests that we should consider Russian foreign policy as anything other than a ‘normal’ subject” (ibid.). Great power normalization concords with Russia’s traditional strategic thinking with emphasis on positioning Russia as a great power, but the normalization process disagrees on the means applied.

Polarity, Social Construction and Boundary

As mentioned above, the power structure in the post-Soviet RSC is one of unipolarity centred on the Russian great power. The social construction within this RSC is shaped by fear and the use of violence, by imperial expansion and by the region’s involvement with particularly Europe. The relations of enmity identify this RSC and

it is therefore a conflict formation (Buzan and Wæver 2003:397-398). The preservation of expansionism and outward domination has been possible because among other Russian imperial history never developed ethnic identity at the base of its state building. Instead, the absence of a political concept of nation has in various ways defined Russia. Russian identity is often associated with the concept of state, not nation (Tolz 2003, Buzan and Wæver 2003:407, Teague 2005). It is important to acknowledge, in regards to an expansive and mighty Russia, that 'Russianness' is neither confined to territorial borders nor to an ethnic Russian population. Ethnic Russians is by far the most numerous minority group and, due to Russian patronage, politically also the most powerful diaspora group in the entire post-Soviet space (Kolstø 1999:122). And within this RSC, relations of enmity between the Russian administration and Caucasian secessionism are clearly considered a threat to national security.

This type of social construction was in 1993 formally institutionalized in the Russian policies claiming a particular sphere of interest in what they referred to as their Near Abroad, i.e. the former Soviet Republics (Buzan and Wæver 2003:404). The intention was to both secure Russian minorities abroad and to protect economic interests (ibid.:405). This policy justified heavy military, political and economic involvement in conflicts in Russia's immediate proximity, such as in the Georgian-Abkhazian, the Georgian-Ossetian, and in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts in Southern Caucasus. Keeping control in ones own backyard is implicitly understood as indispensable if Russia is to exert influence on the international level (ibid.:408-410). Despite deep conflict formation, this RSC is still considered one durable geographical cluster of interdependent securitization dynamics. The post-Soviet RSC is formally based on the organization of the CIS, the Russian political domination and manipulation, and the beginnings of a counter alliance between the Western oriented states of Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova (GUUAM¹⁴)

¹⁴ After the withdrawal in 2005 of Uzbekistan from this organization, the formal name has been GUAM.

(ibid.:429). Altogether, these dynamics that were based primarily in relations of enmity, but also in potentially expanding and contracting boundaries, make up the post-Soviet great power complex. According to RSCT, these security relations are part of Russia's agenda on the global level. Russia's abilities to project influence on the regional level gives her clout among global powers. Therefore, Russia's main level of interaction is the global between the post-Soviet RSC and the EU-Europe RSC (ibid.:429) but is closely interlinked with regional dynamics.

Interactions on the Global Level

According to RSCT, the dynamics of great power RSCs may be difficult and misleading to differentiate from those on the global level for two reasons. First, the dynamics within great power RSC directly affect assumptions on the balance of power in the international system. Second, great power interaction on the global level may spill over and intensify dynamics on the regional level. In essence great power RSCs operate on two levels of interactions and may be described as hybrids of both the global and the regional level (Buzan and Wæver 2003:59). For Russia, the global level of interaction is most important because this is where great power privileges and prospects are mediated. It is on the global level in the one-plus-four system that Russia may secure her permanent status in the UN Security Council (ibid.:433), advocate a multipolar world, warn against illegitimate use of force, and engage in economic cooperation. Russian great power ambitions cannot be underestimated, but again this alone could not explain why Russia chose the West.

Three theoretical variables that define main national interests are firmly set in the above RSCT perspective which will conduct the main discussion in the following chapter. RSCT provides for an understanding of these two sets of territorial issues and one set of economic and non-territorial issues. Russian great power ambitions have caused the securitization of particular national interests as follows. Firstly, regional vulnerabilities have directed Russian interaction on the global level in terms of protecting state sovereignty and territorial integrity. The securitization of these national interests caused, among other, overt reactions to NATO expansion. EU and

NATO expansions of membership have efficiently brought Western Europe to the doorstep of Russia's federal borders. The NATO inclusion of former Soviet states took place so rapidly that some argued it was removing space but not suspicion (Strauss 2001). The NATO expansion is a dilemma of trust when confronted with Russian national interests (Kydd 2001:802). The inclusion in 2004 of the Baltic States into the EU, gave the Russian scepticism a key position in deciding on Russia's future of cooperation with both the EU and NATO. Secondly, international opportunities have encouraged Russia to demand a multipolar security constellation. This securitization move contained primarily a critique against the USA but encompassed next an alignment with other states including the USA in the fight against terrorism. After 11 September 2001, new great power political constellations fostered an alliance building across the East-West divide. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 gave the Russian administration an opportunity to be 'rediscovered' as a provider of stability in international security. Lastly, non-territorial vulnerabilities convey the securitization of national interests in economic power, which are particularly pertinent in the dialogue with the EU. Such economic issues are, for example, financial independence, economic disadvantages and integration. The new Russian Federation set out to transfer its communist regime of planned economy, social welfare and nuclear deterrence to one of marked economy, rule of law and genuine respect for human rights. Russian economic interests managed to achieve in the PCA and the Common Strategy some advancement in favour of a free trade area between EU and Russia. Developing relations with the EU were important dynamics in Russian securitization because it enfolded practical and valuable experience in inter-institutional cooperation, for one, but also because it connected Russia to the European trade markets.

This chapter has presented the theoretical perspectives. The RSCT is the appropriate theory because it describes and interlinks important dynamics of securitization on the regional and the global level. Particularly two aspects of the extended security concept pertain to this thesis, and these are Russia's securitization of territorial security and economic security. These two aspects in particular convey the most

delicate vulnerabilities and opportunities in Putin's quest to restore Russia's great power status. And finally, they validated the three variables; the securitization of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, multipolarity and alignment, and economic vulnerabilities. The global level of analysis is important because this is where the reclaim of great power capabilities and status must take place. According to President Putin, Russia is and should be the provider of security in the post-Soviet region and a *sine-qua-non* in security constellations.

4. Discussion of Text Material

The interests of the state lie in the inviolability of the constitutional system and of Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity; in political, economic and social stability; in unconditional assurance of lawfulness and maintenance of law and order; and in the development of international cooperation on equal terms and to mutual benefit (NSC 2000:2).

4.1 Introduction

In his speech, “Russia at the Turn of the Millennium” (1999), President Putin delivered a sober recount of Russia’s possibilities and challenges in the era of globalization. Russia was taking part in the new type of societies developing post-industrial characteristics. This implied that more importance had to be directed to the secondary and the tertiary sectors. In 1999, this speech referred to globalization in terms of both hope and fear (Putin 1999:210). The rapid advancement of only a few countries was perceived as a threat to Russian industrial production and economic progress. On the path along international technological evolution, the modernization process in Russia was hampered by severe economic difficulties, such as low GDP, old equipment, and little capital investment and national spending on research and technological development. In all, the Soviet legacy had taken its toll on Russian ambitions. President Putin therefore urged the Russian public and businesses to learn from the Soviet failures. “Russia has reached its limit for political and socio-economic upheavals, cataclysms, and radical reforms” (Putin 1999:212), he asserted. Russia simply could not bear anymore political turmoil if the country was to retain its rightful place among the world’s great powers. To divert away from a blind pursuit of Western text book recipes, Putin made a further appeal for a Russian specific model of economic restructuring. Russia had to undergo considerable changes and do so rapidly.

The Russian Federation securitized all political, military and economic disadvantages that the country experienced at the turn of the millennium:

The condition of the national economy and incomplete nature of the system and structure of the authorities of state and of society, social and political polarization of society and criminalization of social relations, the growth of organized crime and terrorism, and a deterioration in intercommunal and international relations are all creating a broad range of internal and external threats to the country's security (NSC 2000:3).

The ensuing discussion will now put Russia's explicit discourse on state sovereignty and territorial integrity, multipolarity and terrorism, and economic weakness and integration under particular scrutiny. The academic purpose is to examine securitization dynamics that may have led to Russia's strategic cooperation with the West.

4.2 Russia's Political Position

Russia's position as a great power was ubiquitously mentioned in all strategy documents, and the explicit reference was outstanding in volume as well as in significance. It seemed to be the essential driving force of both the Russian elite and of the people. The connotation evoked national pride and bore with it a sense of cultural uniqueness. Preserving Russian state sovereignty and territorial integrity at the core of the regional unipolar power structure was imperative for the regime's existence. Above all, the political goals were to stave off secession and terrorism from around the Federation's borders and to preserve strategic stability within those borders.

I Vulnerabilities: State Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

One of Putin's main reasons for giving top priority to great power status had to do with state identity. Presumably a strong state was a source of order and the primary driving force for any change (Putin 1999:214). Any other choice but the one "to develop relying on our distinctive [Russian] character, and own efforts" (Putin 2000:1) was for the weak, and thus not amendable to a strong and self-confident Russia. His interpretation of a historically coinciding pattern of political instability furthermore defined and threatened Russia's political development and state building. "All of the periods during which Russia has been weakened, whether politically or

economically, have always and inexorably brought to the fore the threat of the country's collapse" (Putin 2003:1). Moreover, a strong state could moreover reduce the risk of bureaucratic and constitutional disruption and thus preserve sovereignty. Domestic preservation of state sovereignty and territorial integrity meant avoiding any attempts to violently overthrow the constitutional order, and prevent any organized illegal activities aimed at destabilizing the political situation (MD 2000:4). Consequently, a strong state called for bureaucratic efficiency. Bureaucratic incompetence had made the country politically, economically and militarily vulnerable. This was a deliberate critique of the former President Yeltsin's economic and public management. Upon taking power, President Putin was set on bureaucratic reform. The first Annual Address focused particularly on reforms of state bureaucracy wherein he insisted on "the dictatorship of Law" (Putin 2000:7). He argued that the structure of the Russian state needed to change but that any state reform must henceforth neither jeopardize bureaucratic efficiency nor impede on political authority. He insisted on restructuring the system of state authorities, which was incomplete and had thus far only created "a broad range of internal and external threats to the country's national security" (NSC 2000:3). New federal districts were subsequently set up to "increase the effectiveness of state policies, stabilize international relations, and bring more clarity to the organization of Russian power" (Putin 2002:5). Bureaucratic efficiency and a tighter vertical power structure were the means to amass political strength and ensure Russia's regional dominance. According to Bobo Lo (2005:1), this renewal of Russian authoritarianism under Putin translated seamlessly into an aggressive foreign policy.

With regard to Russia's international strength relative to other world powers, Putin eloquently sketched out Russia's great power status. He aspired to become an "equal in the community of the most developed nations" (Putin 2003:1) and sought to "strengthen Russia's place in the world" (Putin 2004:1). He also pointed to Russia's expected high rank as the "recognised place" as though it was predestined (Putin 2003:1). The President also conveyed a fear in the international community to deal with a confident Russia. Building an "independent, strong and self-reliant Russia"

was a “competitive battle” (Putin 2004:2) that could, if the political elite failed, end up in political isolation. This was because the remnants from the previous East-West divide still fed Russian scepticism in the world. And the efforts to strengthen the Russian state were sometimes deliberately interpreted as authoritarianism (Putin 2004:2). Despite the likelihood of being misinterpreted, “there will be no going back on the fundamental principles of our politics. Commitment to democratic values is dictated by the will of our people and by the strategic interests of Russia itself” (Putin 2004:2). A strong state depended accordingly on “ensuring a normal life for all our people” (ibid.). Therefore, Russia must stand up against the difficult consequences of the Cold War, which were “attempts to infringe on the sovereign rights of nations in the disguise of ‘humanitarian’ operations” (Putin 2000:3). The Russian administration was ill at ease and suffered from what they perceived was a Western secret agenda. This led to a concern about protecting Russian privileges vis-à-vis international diplomacy, such as the respect of Russia’s veto right in the UN Security Council. “Not only our authority on the international stage but also the political and economic situation in Russia itself depends on how competently and effectively we use our diplomatic possibilities” (Putin 2001:8). Because of Russian scepticism, the only way to circumvent Russia from exercising her veto would be to overrule the UNSC decision making monopoly and apply military force regardless.

Russia’s self imposed responsibility to maintain security in the world stressed the support of non-proliferation regimes, in particular the 1972 ABM Treaty¹⁵; “the cornerstone of strategic stability” (FPC 2000:5). Along this vein, Russia encouraged the reduction of conventional armed forces, and regarded international peacekeeping as an effective instrument in conflict resolution. The Military Doctrine asserted that Russia preferred “political, diplomatic, and other non-military means of preventing [...] military threats at regional and global levels” (MD 2000:5). The alternative was

¹⁵ The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, signed in 1972, was central in the US and Soviet arms reduction. The treaty was in force until 2002 when the USA decided to withdraw and has since promoted a system of National Missile Defence, which would have been illegal according to the ABM Treaty.

strategies of aggressive unilateral action that could provoke arms race and further aggravate interstate, national and religious strife.

One of Russia's main objectives in foreign policy was to form "a good-neighbor belt along the perimeter of Russia's borders, to promote elimination of the existing and prevent the emergence of potential hotbeds of tension and conflicts in the region" (FPC 2000:2). The more colloquial language in the Annual Addresses allowed the President to be relatively personal and intimate about his nation's main strengths and weaknesses. The conflict in Chechnya served as a domestic case of concern with infinite rhetorical potential. President Putin hailed the pro-Russian result of the 2003 referendum in Chechnya "that marked the end of troubled times in Chechnya". The President thanked the Chechen people "for their courage [...] and for the wisdom that is so inherent in people who are simple and yet always so sensitive to the truth. People in Chechnya felt in their hearts their responsibility and [felt] where their human interest lies" (Putin 2003:3). In many ways, territorial integrity embodied the Chechen conflict. President Putin's success of keeping the federation together has been measured in the outcome of secessionist claims in the south. At the beginning of his period, only thirty-five percent of the Russian population believed that Putin had made progress towards a settlement in Chechnya (White in Allison et al. 2006:43). However, a survey in the year 2005, found that sixty-five percent of Russians said Putin had successfully improved Russia's international recognition (ibid.). The resolute military intervention may have offered him this high political status. Ironically, Putin's military prowess in Chechnya became an admired trademark and increased his prominence in spite of the population's outspoken scepticism against devastating warfare only a few years earlier. As such, the Chechen-Russian electoral victory in 2003 officially confirmed Russia's territorial integrity but it had come at a significant price. And the straightforward presentation of Chechens who, before the referendum, used to be 'medieval bandits' but who had in the meantime become 'law abiding' was more rhetorically charming than analytically relevant.

Evidently, the future and development of Russia was dependent on the unity of the federation free from secessionist claims. Russia would be defenceless “if our society is splintered into little groups and if we all busy ourselves with the narrow interests of our particular group” (Putin 2003:2). The President was convinced that the conflict in Chechnya and the fight against terrorism ought to be Russia’s main reasoning for consolidating democracy and ensuring human rights (Putin 2004:8). The Russian administration expressed concerns about the growth of international terrorism and the illegal trafficking of weapons, which were beginning to exert significant influence on global and regional stability (FPC 2000:3). Offering military support in the fight against international terrorism was for Russia just as much a regional and domestic exercise as it was strategic in the face of western power consolidation.

The preservation of territorial integrity was also important because Russian security was constantly under threat from NATO’s eastward expansion. “NATO’s transition to the practice of using military force outside its zone of responsibility and without UN Security Council sanction could destabilize the entire global strategic situation” (NSC 2000:5). The FPC warned against the manifested attempts to “belittle the role of a sovereign state as the fundamental element of international relations”, which has generated “a threat of arbitrary interference in internal affairs” (FPC 2000:3). Such provocations to existing regimes of international security that encouraged humanitarian interventions were interpreted as having destabilizing impacts on the Russian political and military situation (MD 2000:2). The global threat of direct military aggression had decreased, but other threats, such as secessionist territorial claims international interference in internal affairs, or opposition to Russia’s strengthening as an influential power had increased (MD 2000:3). The manner in which to reduce these threats was to maintain “strategic stability in the world through states’ compliance with their international obligations” and ensure favourable conditions for global and regional stability (NSC 2000:11). And, these threatening tendencies were furthermore aggravated by “the limited resource support for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, making it difficult to uphold its foreign economic interests and narrowing down the framework of its information and cultural

influence abroad” (FPC 2000:3). However, in order to defend against the growing threat of external interference in domestic politics, Russian foreign policy should instead;

influence general world processes with the aim of forming a stable, just and democratic world order, built on generally recognized norms of international law, including [...] the goals and principles in the UN Charter, on equitable and partnership relations among states (FPC 2000:1).

In response to the West’s disrespect of Russian interests over Kosovo, the Military Doctrine of 2000 articulated a level of deterrence. The document declared that Russia’s possession of nuclear weapons should be interpreted as “a factor in deterring aggression, safeguarding military security [...] and maintaining international stability and peace” (MD 2000:5). The Russian political elite played the nuclear card and held it against US and NATO’s power dominance. This should, however, be understood as a move to preserve Russia’s existing privileges, particularly the country’s veto right in the UN Security Council.

The entirety of section III in the FPC reviewed Russian priorities to collectively resolve global problems under UN jurisdiction. In international peacekeeping, “Russia proceeds from the premise that only the U.N. Security Council has the authority to sanction use of force” (FPC 2000:5). The blatant disregard for the international norm of non-intervention presented a substantial threat to Russian state sovereignty and territorial integrity. This threat was manifested in “the desire of some states to diminish the role of existing mechanisms for ensuring international security, above all the United Nations and the OSCE” (NSC 2000:4-5). Hence, Russia considered any endorsements in violation of the UN Charter to be unlawful and destabilizing to all international relations. The illegitimate deployment of power should be collectively rejected and regional stability be protected. This was the lesson learned in 1999: “Attempts to introduce to the international parlance such concepts as ‘humanitarian intervention’ and ‘limited sovereignty’ in order to justify unilateral power actions bypassing the U.N. Security Council are not acceptable” (FPC 2000:5). The Russian administration was impelled to strengthen the UN’s position in international decision making and peace keeping.

Consistent in these documents was an understanding of preserving state sovereignty and territorial integrity as the indispensable means to return Russia's influence in the system of international decision making and peacekeeping. This latter mechanism should, however, always rest on a strengthened legal foundation in strict accordance with the UN Charter (FPC 2000:5) and the respect for non-intervention. The Russian foreign policy repeatedly warned against international military involvements in domestic problems. This was because the "use of power methods bypassing existing international legal mechanisms cannot remove the deep socio-economic, inter-ethnic and other contradictions that underlie conflicts" (FPC 2000:2). The President's rationale for protecting state sovereignty and territorial integrity was rhetorically based in NATO's illegitimate humanitarian interventions. But UN member states, on the other hand, had also started to scrutinize the principle of state sovereignty. This discourse was part of the global powers' general reflections on a human security agenda after bipolarity and military deterrence. One of the solutions to ameliorate Russia's vulnerabilities and the threat from loss of a sovereignty guarantee was to "ensure Russia's cooperation, especially with the world's leading countries, on equally and mutually advantageous terms" (NSC 2000:6). The strengthening of state regulations in Russia's public domain was crucial for the implementation of Putin's pragmatism. Russia pursued an independent foreign policy based on "consistency and predictability, on mutually advantageous pragmatism" (FPC 2000:3) and sought joint decision making in foreign affairs. Russian foreign policy followed a strict balance of objectives versus possibilities, because "the scope of participation in international affairs must be adequate to the actual contribution to strengthening the country's positions" (FPC 2000:4). Enhanced cooperation with the world's great powers was an important part of the state's restoration project.

Any official plea for the preservation of state sovereignty must be viewed in the context of the 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo. From the Russian perspective, this was an assault on, and a move away from, the legally founded convention of non-intervention and respect for national state sovereignty. The new emphasis on universal human rights posed a threat to Russia's sovereignty along the lines of

“today Yugoslavia – tomorrow Russia”. Some politicians took extreme precautions after the 1999 NATO actions in Kosovo. The Russian elite and analysts were fearful that Russia could experience the same fate in Chechnya. One view advised Russia to “move from a policy of cooperation in a position of subordination to cooperation combined with simultaneous containment of NATO” (Lukin in Smith 1999:10). A Duma representative and NATO critic proposed to break off any ties with NATO and end Russian partaking in the Partnership for Peace-program; to support India instead of Germany in becoming full UN Security Council member; to strengthen military cooperation with the Islamic world, South East Asia and Latin America; and finally to build up Russian military power as a counter to NATO (ibid.). This explicit focus on state sovereignty and territorial integrity originated as an attempt to protect Russia against NATO’s task expansion, such as undertaking humanitarian interventions. Gradually, however, state sovereignty portrayed the need to resist domestic political upheavals and any attempts by external efforts of arbitrary interference in internal affairs.

In sum, a focus on domestic vulnerabilities guided Putin’s decision to construct a strong state. He was determined to clean up after Yeltsin and argued that only a strong and efficient state could prevent the country from being socially fragmented and constitutionally disrupted. On the global level of interactions, the Russian political elite aspired to fend off the new extended issues in post-Cold War security such as the inclination towards humanitarian interventions. One could interpret this as part of an aggressive policy. Putin clearly stated that he was not intimidated and that Russia would not tolerate any reduction in the legitimate right to veto in the UN Security Council. If not aggressive, then the foreign policy was certainly an attempt to redirect or slow down the ongoing reorganisation of world power and to maintain focus on international law and respect of non-intervention. The anticipated reduction of unpredictability in world affairs seems to have motivated Putin’s foreign policy. Russia’s more or less direct disregard of international post-Cold War security policies, such as humanitarian interventions, should be interpreted as a warning signal to US / NATO unilateralism. Such forthright policies favoured global multipolarity

and have in turn become part of Russia's rationale for cooperating more actively with European or pan-European institutions, e.g. the EU, the OSCE and some UN organs. In retrospect, Russia's interpretations of respect for state sovereignty in the post-Cold War security architecture have resulted in a firm discourse on independence. A strong Russian state was crucial to its pursuit of a great power position. Likewise, territorial integrity has been a key part of reclaiming a great power status. The latter variable pertains to the vulnerabilities regarding strategic stability within the federation's borders and along the southern perimeters.

II Opportunities: Multipolarity and Alignment

As a concept, multipolarity described the distribution of power in the international system and was during the 1990s the most prevalent principle in Russian foreign policy. It was particularly the change in Ministers of Foreign Affairs in 1996 (from Kozyrev to Primakov) that contributed to the shift in strategic thinking away from the ideology of Atlanticism and in favour of multipolarity. Although the Russian political elite did not completely avoid partnership with the West, Russia's support of multipolarity carefully emphasized a greater commitment to states and centres other than the USA, such as Europe, China, and India among others (Webber and Smith 2002:149). All three strategy documents, in addition to the account by the Minister of Defence in 2003, pointed to two main tendencies in the world. On the one hand, these were the struggle between the trends of unipolarity with the USA as superpower and, on the other, a structure with plural powers based in international law. The latter tendency stimulated a Russian foreign policy that was critical to US supremacy in foreign affairs and opposed to NATO enlargement. The sentiment was that US supremacy had left Russia with only a marginal role to play in important decision-making. But was it necessarily so that a security constellation of unipolarity and a Russian influence on the global level were mutually exclusive?

The following discussion will demonstrate that Russia's political support and humanitarian relief in the war against terrorism signalled a shift away from this policy of multipolarity and with Russia playing a relatively prominent part this time.

With full acknowledgment that validity and measurement reliability may be put at risk, the following discussion of multipolarity and alignment in the war against international terrorism will overlap with the two previous sections and draw on both for relevance. It would however be unrealistic, counterproductive and impossible to split the discussion completely. While the former variable reflected on domestic vulnerabilities of political secessionism, the ensuing section will focus on the opportunities in the context of international terrorism. The interesting point will be to assess Russia's interpretations of and proactive approach to shifting suppositions in international relations.

Russia's motivation to appreciate multipolarity at the top of world power constellations was wrapped in loose but captivating 'diplomatic' rhetoric. The common denominator was explicitly the fear of US unilateral use of power. For example, Russia designed foreign policy strategies in order to counter "the growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination by the United States" (FPC 2000:2). The efforts to discourage US unipolar power domination supported a multipolar world and were formally sustained in policies aiming to;

build a system of partnership and allied relations that improve the conditions and parameters of international cooperation [and] to achieve a multi-polar system of international relations that really reflects the diversity of the modern world with its great variety of interests (FPC 2000:2).

Overall, the manners in which the official strategy documents emphasized the multipolarity concept seem consistently based in perceptions of threat to Russian national security or as worst case scenarios, such as US interference. The European states, on the other hand, were referred to as the hub of Russia's traditional foreign policy. "The main aim of Russia's foreign policy in Europe is the creation of a stable and democratic system of European security and cooperation" (FPC 2000:8). Although NATO and the EU shared, with only a few exceptions, the same member

countries¹⁶, the two clearly represented different agendas. Russia's official strategy documents pointed to the qualities of these central actors in terms of US military superiority and NATO's infidelity, and European partners in trade respectively.

Whereas the 2000 documents specified multipolarity, the Annual Addresses barely mentioned the concept. Possibly, this may have come as a result of nothing more than variations in discursive practices. More likely, the concept was toned down in the years following the 11 September attacks. The Annual Addresses stressed multilateral cooperation as means of defence but did not point out multipolarity per se. But beyond a doubt, the text material content suggested that Putin still supported the idea of a world with several power centres. Already in Putin's first Address he announced his concerns about Russia's lack of political choice internationally. Russia had to rebuild its strength, but "not in defiance of the international community, not against other strong nations, but together with them" (Putin 2000:2). Furthermore, the Address of 2001 laid out the objectives of Russian foreign policy. It outlined the challenges and possibilities in international relations, strategic balance of national interests, importance to cooperate with Europe, and on NATO's unilateral tendencies. And it ascribed Russia's biggest problem to the tendency of NATO to ignore "the opinion of the international community and the provisions of international legal documents in its decision-making process" (Putin 2001:9), which was an implicit call for multipolarity.

Nonetheless, Russia's most important foreign policy task was to "combat international terrorism which is capable of destabilizing the situation not only in individual countries, but in entire regions" (FPC 2000:6). In effect, terrorism seemed to be the threat which was most unequivocally linked to Russia's desire for strengthened international cooperation. For example;

¹⁶ Of the European countries, only Austria (EU), Cyprus (EU), Finland (EU), Iceland (NATO), Ireland (EU), Malta (EU), Norway (NATO), Sweden (EU) and Turkey (NATO) were member states of only one of the two organizations as of 2007.

Using the framework of international agreements, there must be effective collaboration with foreign states and their law-enforcement and special agencies, and also with international organizations tasked with fighting terrorism. Broad use must be made of international experience of dealing with this phenomenon and there must be well-coordinated mechanism for countering international terrorism, closing all available routes for illicit weapons and explosives within the country and preventing their import from abroad (NSC 2000:10).

More examples followed: “to fight it [terrorism] requires unification of efforts by the entire international community” (NSC 2000:2); the “Russian Federation calls for the further measures to intensify cooperation among states in this area” of combating international terrorism (FPC 2000:6) and Russian foreign policy should be designed to “develop international cooperation in the fight against transnational crime and terrorism” (NSC 2000:11). Such explicit appeal for international collective action was also found with regard to economic cooperation although not as directly.

Immediately after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, President Putin urged that “the entire community should unite in the struggle against terrorism” (Drozdiak 2001). If one isolates his comments in that context, Putin’s active support for the subsequent US led military intervention in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom was unsurprising. Yet, the world leaders and politicians were astounded. Scholars, however, were not equally astonished (Medvedev 2004). Putin made his choice also in spite of the views of the general public (Kolosov 2002) and the position of the majority of the Russian political elite (Yavlinsky 2002). According to an attendant at a special meeting among 21 leading politicians of Russia, the president invited some Duma representatives and members of the Upper Chamber to a discussion on what position Russia should take in this dramatic situation. Of these participants, one required Russia to support the Taliban, and only two said unconditional support to the anti-terrorist coalition was the right thing to do. All the other advocated Russia’s neutrality (ibid.). All things considered, it was anything but predetermined in 2001 that the US led Operation Enduring Freedom was to receive Russian support in the war against terrorism. It became evident, however, that the international war against terrorism could indeed serve deeply entrenched national interests of the Russian Federation. Russia’s intolerance for acts of terror had been explicit in Russia’s strategy documents for as long as the Russia-Chechen conflict had persisted.

Whether or not this latter operation was an act of self-defence or an act of aggression was subject to legal interpretations. How to defend against this diffuse and non-state threat picture was also unclear. But the terrorist attacks on US homeland had however created a common basis for understanding the kinds of threats to international security facing the global powers. Russia agreed that, given the circumstances, a military response was both acceptable and efficient. For Russia, the war against terrorism helped reassure strategic stability in the post-Soviet RSC.

Every Annual Address after 2001 thoroughly confirmed that international terrorism posed the main military threat to Russian territory. The main difference, however, from the strategy documents of 2000 was the unreserved self confidence in the rhetoric: “Russia is one of the most reliable guarantors of international stability. It is Russia’s principled position that has made it possible to form a strong anti-terrorist coalition” (Putin 2002:9). And “an adequate response to the most serious threats of the 21st century [...] can only be provided by the united efforts of the international community (Putin 2004:8). Bringing together an international alliance was therefore a valuable “tool to coordinate intergovernmental efforts in fighting this evil” (Putin 2003:8). Because Russia had managed to remain the unquestionable power in the post-Soviet space, in 2001 Putin gained a unique opportunity to reclaim influence at the global level.

How can Russia’s threat perception be described after President Putin had confirmed his unconditional support to his US counterpart? Did the Russian discourse on multipolarity transform or did it simply evaporate as an idea? Maintaining a dialogue with USA was mentioned already in the first Annual Address after the 11 September attacks, i.e. in the 2002 Address. Putin asserted that “no one [nation] intends to be hostile towards us – no one wants this or needs it” (Putin 2002:2). He continued to describe this new amity in terms of a “constant dialogue with the United States, and work on changing our qualities with NATO” (Putin 2002:10). This second appeal referred directly to the 2002 summit of the NATO – Russia Council which resulted in “A New Quality” (NATO 2002). The Address of 2004 was the next in which such

explicit reference to Russia's non-threatening, and even constructive, dialogue with the USA occurred (Putin 2004:8). Besides the Russian support of major European partners and the threat from US dominance, most other allusions to a multipolar world were interpretations of economic interactions such as the Group of Eight and the non-proliferation regime. These were distinguished as important "global partnership[s]" (Putin 2003:4). While new meaning was included into the multipolarity concept, Russia's official opinion of UN authority and its "provisions of international law" (Putin 2003:8) was never omitted. For example, it "is extremely important that if a certain threat intensifies [that a] universally acknowledged decision-making mechanism exists. Undoubtedly, the most important such mechanism we have is the UNSC" (Putin 2003:8). And finally, Putin discussed the formation of an international regime against terrorism as a way to distribute power among the world's great powers.

Russia values the anti-terrorist coalition. We value it as a tool to coordinate intergovernmental efforts in fighting this evil. Furthermore, successful co-operation within the coalition and within the framework of international law may become a good example of consolidation of civilised nations in fighting common threats (Putin 2003:8).

In Russian security discourse, the US war against international terrorism led to more direct appeals for international cooperation. This was because first, the fight against international terrorism mirrored Russia's political and military campaign in Chechnya. And second, these international efforts had the potential of being organized as an intergovernmental force in agreement with modernist characteristics. This coincided with Russia's petition for state-to-state cooperation rather than the more post-modernist regional or limited institutional initiatives. In other words, Russia's contribution to the war against terrorism was decided on from a domestic point of view. Also the multipolarity concept had been used instrumentally. As already suggested, the multipolarity concept originated in opposition to US political and military dominance in international relations. This sentiment, however, was more or less abandoned as such after 11 September 2001. This idea of balancing act behind the multipolarity concept did not disappear from Russian strategic thinking but emphasized instead an alignment on the global level. Russia's focus on several global

powers persisted but now in cooperation with the USA as well. In other words, although it originated from a negative US sentiment, after 11 September 2001 this concept was used to confront neither the US nor NATO. The multipolarity concept continually emphasized the respect for international law, legitimate use of force, and intergovernmental efforts across the previous Atlantic divide.

In sum, a wide interpretation of multipolarity as a theoretical concept directed attention to international cooperation in political, economic as well as in military affairs. According to Russian foreign policy priorities, it was repeatedly important to sustain multipolarity in the international system in order to conserve the UN authority. A more threat based interpretation of multipolarity showed that the concept embodied an explicit opposition to US world dominance. Lately, it has been important to fight international terrorism and reduce the potential fallouts from ethnic upheavals. Then again, multipolarity as such is not mentioned once in any of the Annual Addresses.

In the Russian view, the Russian state was and should be the dominant power in the post-Soviet RSC. But this status made it both vulnerable and a target for acts of terrorism. The Russian public could relate to the impact of terrorist acts and sympathized strongly with the American people, but disagreed in principle on the US plans to use force (Kolosov 2002). Furthermore, the war against international terrorism also encompassed the prospects for military security on post-Soviet territory. It had become obvious that Russia was no longer able to maintain its political supremacy in the post-Soviet RSC (Shmelyov 2005). A strategic partnership with the Western forces, therefore, could prove to more effectively restore Russian influence. Hence, the USA helped ensure Russian national interests and did what Russia could not do alone, which was to reduce the security threat from the Central Asian region along Russia's southern borders (Legvold 2002). Such efforts conveyed the possibility of military cooperation with the USA. As stated by the Russian General Vladimirov, "Now, it is finally clear to all that the West and Russia have a common enemy – Islamic fundamentalist terrorist organizations. If we are not

complete idiots, we must not let this opportunity slip” (Reynolds 2001). The Minister of Defence, Sergei Ivanov, specified to the contrary that there was no “basis for even the hypothetical possibility of NATO military operations on the territory of Central Asia” (ibid.). Nevertheless, the USA opened a base for military and humanitarian operations in Uzbekistan, made use of an international airport in Tajikistan, and attained an over-flight right from Kazakhstan as well as refuelling privileges from Turkmenistan (Nichol 2007). While the Russian administration had quietly opposed the increasing US influence in Central Asia prior to 11 September, the President soon gave his consent¹⁷. During the 1990’s, Kremlin had followed a more timid than proactive foreign policy of pursuing multipolarity. Although put on hold for a few years in reaction to NATO’s enlargement in 1995 and the Kosovo intervention in 1999, this latter strategy was generally pursued and had in turn forced the USA to marginalize Russia (Skak 2003). Putin’s positive support of the US led war from 2001 was definitely Russia’s most aggressive foreign policy vis-à-vis the West.

As a result, the war against terrorism consolidated military power, and restructured and reorganized some of the rather unclear post-Cold War international relations. It remained uncertain, however, in late 2001 whether or not the improved US – Russian relations was a temporary partnership in the face of a common threat or a long term strategic Russian shift towards the West (Jensen 2001). Obviously, the Russian leadership was less articulate on the principle of non-intervention in the war against terrorism. The principles of international law still guided Russian foreign policy but the centre of attention shifted from a balancing act to a policy of state-to-state cooperation against international terrorism.

¹⁷ According to Polikanov and Timmins (2004:228), President Putin had already consented to US military bases in Central Asia before the Minister of Defence was informed.

4.3 Russia's Economic Position

The global distribution of power is structurally centred on the world's most advanced economies. In order for a country to ameliorate its international image and increase access to decision making in world affairs, economic efficiency and integration could serve as essential instruments. Up until President Putin's first period, the pursuit of these ends had not been fully considered in Russia. Three developments stand out as particularly challenging to Russia. First, the disastrous legacy after Yeltsin resulted in a series of tough financial reforms. Second, the geo-economic landscape made economic progress in Russia more difficult and costly than it did to other comparable countries¹⁸ (A. Lynch 2002). And lastly, Russia's economic prospects were thwarted by dropping international oil prices between 1991 – 1994 and 1996 – 1998 (Williams 2007). Russia had indeed special needs and President Putin was set on the creation of a Russia specific development plan that took these challenges into consideration.

In response to these weaknesses, Putin (1999) issued a long term strategy for Russia in the 21st century that aimed to learn from the lessons of the past and quickly overcome the protracted crisis. Putin's grand strategy attended to the Russian idea of being a politically integrated society that shared fundamental ideological orientations and basic values, such as democracy, security and open market relations. From this followed that growth in the economic sector and economic integration could effectively ensure national security. Hence, incentives for international cooperation such as strength and independence in the strictly competition-based self-help system were repeatedly securitized.

¹⁸ A number of constant obstacles make full and efficient exploration of Russia's natural resources difficult. Most importantly perhaps, Russian rivers flow from south to north and make access to world oceans difficult. Russian infrastructure is thus forced to rely on land transportation rather than on the five times cheaper transportation at sea (A. Lynch 2002:40-42).

III Vulnerability: Economic Weakness

President Putin's administration recognized economic progress to be the indispensable stepping stone in their grand political project and stressed that "[w]e have no time for a slow start" (Putin 1999:213). "Russia's national interests may be assured only on its basis of sustainable economic development" (NSC 2000:2). This was because "a stable economy is the main guarantor of a democratic society and the very foundation of a strong state that is respected in the world" (NSC 2000:2). In his millennium speech, President Putin elaborated thoroughly on the economic possibilities and challenges ahead. The international economic system valued labour of material production increasingly less than service within the secondary and tertiary sectors. And in this world system of globalization, national economic development would have been improbable without broad integration of Russia in the system of world economic ties (FPC 2000:6).

The economic situation in the year 2000 posed both internal and external threats to the country's national security. For example, adverse economic development could encourage separatist aspirations and lead to increased political instability and thus threaten national security (NSC 2000:3). And the Russian elite perceived independent economic policy to be a principal task in order to ensure national security (NSC 2000:6). Moreover, the political administration regarded interaction with Western European states as another "important resource for Russia's defence of its national interests [...] and for the stabilization and growth of the Russian economy" (FPC 2000:9). President Putin repeated in his first Annual Address what he had already stressed in the Strategy Documents; a "stable economy is the main guarantor of a democratic society, and the very foundation of a strong nation that is respected in the world" (Putin 2000:2). The accumulation of foreign debt was conversely a sign of the state's weakness (Putin 2000:5). And because of inflation, a soaring foreign debt and the devaluation, the Russian economy had lagged so far behind that it would have to grow at unprecedented rates if not to reduce "our capabilities in international politics and the world economy" (Putin 2002:2). Loosing advantage in the international

marked economy was accordingly a perceived threat to Russian economic and national security.

In order to ensure Russia's "worthy" position in the world, "the rapid transition to stable economic growth are of decisive importance" (FPC 2000:3). A glance at Russia's economic prospects compared with European standards illustrated that this rapid transition was easier said than done. An annual growth in GDP of eight percent over a fifteen year period would provide Russia with standards of living similar to the lowest echelon of Europe's industrial countries, e.g. Portugal (Putin 1999:213). In the year 2000, Russia's GDP had increased by an annual seven percent but the total GDP in US dollars remained less than half of the GDP in 1997¹⁹ (A. Lynch 2002:32).

Hence, economic growth was already taking place but the distance to go had stretched simultaneously. It was moreover crucial that economic transformation came about fast and that Russia sought her own model for renewal. Because, the "future depends on combining the universal principles of the market economy and democracy with Russian realities" (Putin 1999:212). Furthermore, a balanced monetary policy should "reduce Russia's dependence on external borrowing and [contribute] to strengthen its presence in the international financial and economic organizations (NSC 2000:7). Reducing dependence on foreign investments and loans was perhaps the main component of Russia's post-Yeltsin recuperation.

But it was not just the domestic character of economic stagnation that had been securitized, so was also the anarchic self-help system at the core of the world's free economic forces. In this international economic system, no one had hostile intentions any more towards Russia or any other country because there was no need.

Admittedly, however, no one was willing to help either and instead "we need to fight for a place in the 'economic sun' ourselves" (Putin 2002:2). President Putin described economic competition as a fight for markets, for investment, and for political and economic influence. In this game Russia must remain strong and show muscles. Putin

¹⁹ See Table 1 in Appendix.

gave henceforth exclusive political priority to all sorts of competition. “Today, the countries of the world compete with each other in all economic and political parameters”, such as in the security level of the country, in the attractiveness of the business climate, and in the quality of state institutions (Putin 2002:2).

Similarly, the Annual Addresses to the Federal Assembly contained frequent references to political opportunities on the international level with regards to economic integration. As soon as Putin became president, it was clear that he intended to turn the negative trend in Russian economy but it was not until the second Address that he explicitly pronounced integration as a word of opportunities. “Integration with Europe is one of the key areas of our foreign policy” (Putin 2001:9). For example, Putin regarded membership in the WTO as a tool, with which those who knew “how to use it become stronger” (Putin 2002:8). Economic integration seemed to be an either-or situation. Moreover, “the biggest success comes to those countries that consciously use their energy and intelligence to integrate themselves into the world economy” (Putin 2003:4). From now on the expansion of the EU meant new markets, more investments and “new possibilities for the future of Greater Europe” (Putin 2004:8). He pointed not just to integration with the great Western powers but also to border and interregional cooperation as an important source of trade and economic ties (Putin 2004:8). Interestingly, the vision of Russia’s political independence among global partners was evident in all documents. It seemed overall clear that the Russian Federation could not prosper and develop in absence of political and economic strength.

The way of arguing in the Annual Addresses, furthermore, was somewhat more proactive and solution based than what was the case in the Strategy Documents. The former texts conveyed compelling arguments, such as “we need to fight” (Putin 2002:2) as mentioned above, “we are building constructive, normal relations” (Putin 2002:2), “we must take the next step and focus” (Putin 2003:1), and “we must grow faster than the rest of the world” (Putin 2004:2). The qualities of economic rhetoric were more convincing and almost emotional, maybe because implications of changes

in the national economy have direct effects on every individual citizen. And additionally, the general public was an extended recipient group of the Annual Addresses which logically stimulated the President to communicate with more animation. Although the provider and audience of the text material were the same in both cases, the president's office and the Russian public respectively, the Annual Addresses may have obtained a more colloquially persuasive form in order to gain acceptance. Besides the underlying threat of being left out of competition, another economic incentive in international affairs was expressed as the threat from past performance. For example, "it is more important not to remember the past, but to look to the future" (Putin 2000:2). And, "[w]e have to learn the lessons for the future from today's situation" (Putin 2001:6) and after the Address of 2003 and onwards, he started listing the economic achievements made.

The growth of the economy, political stability and the strengthening of the state have had a beneficial effect on Russia's international position. We have been able to a significant degree to make our foreign policy both dynamic and pragmatic (Putin 2004:8).

Globalization and economic integration were perceived as an opportunity to advance. The Strategy Documents of 2000 clearly communicated that

Russia's national interests are directly related to [...] globalization of the world economy [...], intensification of the role of international institutions and mechanisms in world economics and politics [...], the development of regional and sub-regional integration in Europe (FPC 2000:3).

With regard to globalization, the early text material added also a sense of scepticism. Or, there was at least an awareness of the challenges that surfaced in the wake of the globalization process. For instance, there was "a need for enhancing the efficiency of political, legal, foreign economic and other instruments for protecting the state sovereignty of Russia and its national economy in the conditions of globalization" (FPC 2000:4). However, the increasing globalization of the economy and of public international life was three years later part of the Russian game of economic integration. "No country today, no matter how big and how wealthy, can develop successfully in isolation from the rest of the world" (Putin 2003:4). The Russian economic restoration project adapted to the effects of globalization not least

rhetorically. While globalization was the condition, integration was ostensibly the required means for any country to enable economic progress.

Therefore, in order to remain competitive, Russia's foreign policy should be designed to ensure "full-fledged involvement in global and regional economic and political structures" (NSC 2000:11). Implicitly, "full-fledged involvement" meant membership in the most influential international financial institutions. In 1997, Russia became officially the eighth member of the Group of Seven although they had joined the summit meetings already since 1994. However, Russia was not an equal member of the Group of Eight and the Russian delegation could thus not participate in any of the regular financial and economic discussions within the Group (Zwaniecki 2007).

Nonetheless, "Russia attaches great importance to its participation in the Group of Eight" (FPC 2000:4). The priorities in foreign economic activities were "to pave way for international integration of the Russian economy" and "to expand markets for and of Russian products" (NSC 2000:7). Expanding Russian markets and incorporating "Russia into the international system of regulating foreign economic operation, above all the WTO" were all measures taken to ensure national security (Putin 1999:218).

These economic reform plans in particular pointed to more investments, assist science-intensive production, combat the illegal economy, and to consistently integrate the Russian economy into world structures (Putin 1999:217).

The economic dialogue between Russia and the EU started already before the signing of the PCA in 1994. Economic growth is the driving force behind relations with the EU. Russia's economic policy, which was directed almost solely towards the European market, aimed to ensure that Russia could act on her national interests in tough competition internationally. The EU on its part directed its first Common Strategy on Russia and pursued a Russia first policy, which strongly suggested that Russia was a favoured partner in trade.

Similarly, relations with the EU were of key importance. Russia "views the EU as one of its main political and economic partners and will strive to develop with it an intensive, stable and long-term cooperation devoid of expediency fluctuations" (FPC

2000:8). As sketched out in the strategy documents, Russia “shall collaborate with other states in a multilateral format, first of all, within the framework of specialized international agencies, and on a bilateral level” (FPC 2000:6). Maintaining good relations with European states was part of Russia’s traditional foreign policy, in which the main aim was to create a “stable and democratic system of European security and cooperation”. However, multilateral association with Western Europe could not, and did not intend to, replace bilateral cooperation with Russia’s main partners Britain, Germany, Italy and France. Interaction primarily with these most influential states was an important resource for Russia’s defence of its national interests in Europe and world affairs (FPC 2000:9).

Russia’s main partner in trade was definitely the European Union. Data derived in 2004 from Eurostat and the Russian State Statistical Service showed that nearly sixty percent of Russia’s total export went to the EU (European Commission to Russia 2005:11). At the same time, Russia received fifty percent of all import from the EU²⁰. EU’s import from Russia more than doubled from 1999 to 2000, and increased by more than one third during Putin’s first presidential period (ibid.)²¹ All trade compared showed that fifty-seven percent of Russia’s trade was with the EU, whereas only six percent of all EU’s trade was with Russia! Conclusively, the Russian President found it pertinent to support integration in order to achieve national economic growth and cooperation with the most influential states of the world, and particularly with the EU. Whereas relative scepticism was communicated in the Strategy Documents, the Annual Addresses contained more hands-on description of the situation in which Russian economy found itself. They all pointed out some strategic implications and threats of economic inefficiency if Russia did not manage to maintain economic strength on the international arena.

²⁰ See Figure 1 and Figure 2 in Appendix.

²¹ EU imports from Russia summed up to 25.918 million Euros in 1999, 60.918 in 2000, and equalled 80.538 million Euros in 2004.

In sum, the discourse in the text material showed that arguments based on domestic vulnerabilities and the international context were simultaneously at play. The domestic based argumentation focused on economic mismanagement of the past and the urgent need for a Russia specific development model. On the global level, the most important interests were financial independence and economic integration, none of which could take place without the foundation of a strong state. Economic integration was not the main aim in itself but rather the indispensable means for Russia to find its “place in the ‘economic sun’” (Putin 2002:2). The discourse on integration was clear on “full-fledged involvement” (NSC 2000:11) but more ambiguous in regards to globalization processes and effects. The state should design a protectionist foreign and economic policy in the era of globalization (FPC 2000:4) at the same time as it was necessary to adapt to this process. On the whole, the securitization of economic weakness incited a spectre of motives that each could serve as goals in and of themselves but were more importantly part of a grand strategy.

President Putin acquired international recognition by means of active emphasis on cooperation and designed a quite innovative strategy of internationalization. According to Bobo Lo (2003), he avoided any mention of strategic competition with the West and silenced thus the post-Cold War premise of zero-sum balancing. Putin simply did not buy the neo-realist idea, which inferred that success of the West necessarily implied Russia’s defeat in one way or another. Putin successfully transformed zero-sum strategic thinking into a more positive-sum thinking of international power relations, at the same time as he always kept his assumptions of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ at an arms length (Lo 2003:74-75). In this perspective, the Kremlin continued to pursue policies that best served their interests but did so not for the sake of competing with or merely provoking fragile bonds to Western parties as they had been doing earlier (ibid.). Putin had securitized Russia’s qualities as an independent actor in military, political and economic interactions on the global level.

4.4 Final Remarks

The international context and regional developments, together with abundant research, have been crucial for this in-depth discussion of Russia's strategic motivation in relation to NATO and the EU. But before coming to conclusions, this study will revert to a relevant empirical discussion on Russia's foreign affairs. It has been argued that Russia's association with the West has never been a strategic partnership, or at least not intended as such (Nikonov 2005:68), but a somewhat consistent policy based on pragmatic solutions. This argument is often based in case studies of the conflict in Chechnya (Cornell 2003, Baev 2004, Bowker 2004) and in comparative studies of EU – Russian relations (Borko 2001, Vahl 2006). It is not within the scope of this thesis to conclude on either argument but instead allude to the academic debate.

Russia's relentless focus on territorial integrity was understandably reinforced by the outcome, or lack of such, in the war in Chechnya. The conflict prolonged and the so called second war did not seem to recede but quite the contrary. The North Caucasian region had become to the Russian Federation what the Baltic republics were to the Soviet Union, or similar to what Poland had been to the Russian Empire, namely "an inherently alien and subversive element" (Trenin 2001:179). The spill over effect of secessionism and Islamism was a real threat to the Russian border policies, and could actually lead to Russian intervention against the Chechen networks in Georgia and Azerbaijan. The former NATO intervention in Kosovo had brought hope to the possibility of a quick solution also in Chechnya. At least in the Russian public there seemed to be relative eagerness for a second military campaign in Chechnya at the turn of the millennium. The Chechen society in majority adhered to Islam and according to some press reports²², the conflict was assumingly bolstered with

²² Russian media reported that Osama bin Laden had supported Chechen secessionists by sending mercenaries from Afghanistan and Yemen among other to fight in Chechnya (Oliker 2001:40). Russian intelligence found that the radical group led by Basaev received from Osama bin Laden alone a sum of \$30 millions, and up to \$600 000 from various funding units in Saudi Arabia (Bowker 2004:263).

political radicalization from other parts of the Muslim world. According to Cornell (2003), the conflict in Chechnya had congealed and developed Islamic characteristics and received military support from Arabic *mujahedeen*. After a series of Chechen terrorist acts against the Russian public, President Putin entered the Kremlin with a promise to get the Chechnya problem under control. After a series of Chechen terrorist acts against the Russian public, President Putin entered the Kremlin with a promise to get ‘the Chechnya problem’ under control.

And that is what he has done and continues to do. This acknowledgment lead to Baev (2004) to conclude that Russia’s war in Chechnya was not about victory in the war, but rather about the domestic benefits to the President’s regime a prolongation of the war could provide. In illustration, after the 2002 Dubrovka theatre hostage taking, a Council of Europe correspondent wrote that “both sides appear more intransigent than ever” (Bowker 2004:264), and the possibility of an agreeable solution to the conflict was meagre. According to Baev (2004), the tight vertical power structure that Putin established and the type of absolute political control that he exerted should have proved sufficient to end the war, if he wanted to. Instead, Chechen secessionism was placed instrumentally in the political discourses of international terrorism and conveniently absolved Putin from the disproportionate use of force he was accused of before 2001. For example, the response from states leaders in the West expressed their concern and support for the Russian population and particularly the Russian President in the wake of the tragedies at the Dubrovka Theatre in 2002 and at the School Number One in Beslan in 2004. Jack Straw, then British Foreign Secretary said, “we will be expressing complete solidarity with [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin and the Russian government, as well as profound sympathy and concern for those poor children and their teachers” (Blua 2004). Putin’s strict condemnation of antiterrorism received support also from the UN Secretary, German Chancellor, and the Canadian Prime Minister. The European Commission expressed however a sceptic view on Putin’s handling of the hostage taking (ibid.).

Even in economic relations, Russia relentlessly emphasized own independence. In 1999, the pioneer European Union Common Strategy on Russia stimulated Russia to issue a more concrete European policy. It stirred up “a more sober understanding of the EU by Russian officials, with increasing recognition that EU enlargement, in particular, might represent a cause for concern” (D. Lynch 2003:58). One example of this maturity was the responding 1999 Russian Medium-Term Strategy²³ (MTS), which emphasized that Russia intended to decide on her own about the future and progress of Russia’s political development and also about the integration process. Dov Lynch noted that the two documents together illustrated a “strategic gap between Moscow and Brussels” in which the CSR was characterised by a value laden focus on Russia’s need to change profoundly, while the MTS highlighted Russia’s national interests and sovereignty (D. Lynch 2003:59). However, at the following EU – Russian Summit in 2000 held in Paris, Putin said that Russia no longer perceived EU enlargement as a threat but as an opportunity. Analysts saw this comment as a break with the earlier position that EU’s eastern enlargement would cost Russian businesses their export markets. The Russian Security Council went as far as actually encouraging a common European defence policy because this might even lessen the current dependence on NATO and the USA. In that case, the Kaliningrad exclave could become a pilot-project in EU – Russian cooperation (Lambroschini 2000). What was decided on, however, was that Russia and the EU would start a formal dialogue on common interests in the energy sector. And, in March 2001, Russia entered into the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Studies of Russian and EU responses to the concept of strategic partnerships have also leaned towards pragmatism rather than strategies in their conclusions. In a comparison of EU’s and Russia’s strategy documents, Vahl (2006) found that the EU strategy towards Russia was a relatively weak derivative of an association agreement, whose objective was to persuade Russia to converge on EU economic and political

²³ The official name is the Medium-Term Strategy for Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union (2000 – 2010).

norms. In contrast, the more instrumental Russian strategy saw the EU in geo-political terms as a useful agent for a multipolar world. Allegedly the EU was “saying ‘be like us’, whereas Russia [was] saying ‘help us reduce US hegemony’” (Vahl in Emerson 2001:22). And a similar conclusion was reached five years later. Although both Russia and the European Union agreed on the common goal of having a strategic partnership, “there seems to be fundamental differences between the two parties as to what such a strategic partnership should entail in policy operational terms” (Vahl 2006:21).

As opposed to EU’s post-modern interests, Russian national interests in a strategic partnership encouraged traditional modes of international cooperation based on the Westphalian states system. This latter kind of state-to-state partnership limited political exchanges to mere traditional foreign policy assumptions based on inter-governmental politics or “state-centric realism” (Webber and Smith 2002:12, Kagan 2008). Because only in such forms could Russia hold on to the principle of non-interference (Vahl 2006:21). As a result, the conceptualization of strategic partnership depended fully upon different interpretations of what were the preferred premises. And this particular one was a partnership founded on common interests or common enemies without a foundation of deeply shared values. In essence, EU’s Common Strategy on Russia (CSR), revealed an ambitious document that aimed to help develop Russia to become a pluralistic democracy governed by rule of law and based on an open market economy. The Russian response (MTS), on the other hand, did not even once mention Russia’s transition to democracy and market economy on the document’s list of main goals and priorities (Borko 2001:131). In a study of the CSR from a Russian point of view, Borko (2001) found that both of the CSR and the MTS documents emphasized own efforts as means to achieve their common goal. For example, the EU aims to “assist” and “contribute” to Russia’s transition, whereas the MTS aims to utilize EU’s economic potential and experience in order to obtain fair competition in the social market economy (ibid.:131-132). This signalled clearly an imbalance of expectations.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary

Revealing the motivations behind Russia's increased cooperation with the two main security organizations in the west, namely NATO and the EU, has been the focus of this project. The examination was based on an in-depth analysis of three strategy documents from Putin's first presidential period, and five annual addresses to the Federal Assembly over a five-year period. Intertwined with Russia's national interests, three variables in particular were considered: state sovereignty and territorial integrity, multipolarity and alignment, and economic weakness.

Admittedly, Russia's relations with the West are much more complex than the three variables to which this thesis has been limited. This particular project has been structured by the conceptualization of national interests in the strategy documents. Of the core interests referred to in the documents, the most important was the determination by the Russian Federation to restore the country's status as a great power. Guided by Regional Security Complex Theory, this thesis has allowed for the inclusion of inter-subjective perceptions of national security, which in turn have enabled a wide interpretation of both vulnerabilities and opportunities facing Russia.

5.2 Main Findings

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the main findings of this thesis reveal that all three variables played a role in explaining the Russia-specific development plan. The variables can, however, be ordered hierarchically in terms of their impact on the strategic partnership with the West. The domestic non-territorial variable – Russia's economic weakness – had a greater effect on Putin's outreach plan than the other two. A strong Russian economy would beneficially position the country relative to other global powers and provide access to western institutions to which Russia had been

previously denied. The second variable – state sovereignty and territorial integrity – while also domestic in nature, was also of utmost importance to Putin’s plan.

Interestingly, this variable is linked both to Russia’s economic weakness (resulting in a vertical power structure to ensure state sovereignty) and to the third variable under consideration – alignment with the US to fight terrorism. Alignment was a crucial aspect of the strategic partnership but played initially a lesser role since no one could have predicted the events of September 11, 2001. Putin had started a dialogue with NATO, symbolically through the Secretary-General’s visit to Moscow, but the strategic cooperation included practical cooperation that sped up in 2002. In the end, this third variable did provide the Russian President with a unique opportunity to finally bring western countries onside vis-à-vis the country’s troubles with Chechnya.

In general, President Putin engaged in strategic partnerships with the West as part of a grand strategy of normalization. The normalization of Russia as a great power emerged from a foreign policy critique against the ideological anti-Western proclamation under Primakov. Putin shared the Primakovian strategic goals of power, stability, and sovereignty. The means of achieving these, however, now included state-driven economic liberalization, economic and security cooperation with the West, and being a dominating world power especially in the former Soviet area (Tsygankov 2005:141). Putin’s grand strategy in his first presidential period, therefore, was neither a “drive to the West” nor a “drive to the sea”, as opposed to his predecessors (Heikka 2000:4). Instead, it seemed to be a combination of more than one direction in strategic thinking. Putin’s grand strategy of normalization was the result of a realistic assessment about Russia’s relative position in the world. The solution to Russia’s lack of influence in international decision-making forums was to please both European great powers as well as to maintain a dialogue with the American superpower. President Putin designed a Russia specific strategy to regain international recognition and moulded Russia into a normal great power that could gain from economic cooperation with the EU in particular. A crucial aspect of this strategy was domestic in nature – Russia had to overcome its own economic weaknesses in order for this goal to be realized.

The economic dialogue between Russia and the EU involved two tales. The Russian monologue emphasized economic integration while the European monologue demanded democracy. Putin ignored the European demands. For him, economic integration was more important because it provided Russia with opportunities to participate directly in international decision-making. In the era of globalization, Putin (2003:4) clearly stated that no country could advance in isolation from the rest. The discussion of Russia's economic position relative to the world's great powers also pointed to the urgency of Russia's economic restoration project. To become an influential economic player Russia had to achieve economic stability, become less dependent on foreign creditors, undergo post-industrial transformation, and integrate economically. Russia securitized elements of the international economy that best preserved its national interests. Countries such as Russia that were striving for strong and exclusive economic positions were inclined to securitize issues and conditions that could compromise economic prosperity. Difficult access to, and transport of, economically important resources may have stimulated protectionist policies. Russia's comparative advantage existed only in energy and raw material sectors, upon which the national economy had grown increasingly dependent (Brada in Olikar and Charlick-Paley 2002:26).

Putin emphasized Russian uniqueness and sovereignty together with concepts of economic liberalism and sought, first of all, economic relations with the West. This means that he did not necessarily make Russia act as a competitor of the great powers of the West, but aimed to consult with them as equal partners and to mutual advantage. That being said, he had a clear understanding that he would always strive for his goals without compromising sovereignty. This two-tiered approach to modernization curiously led one political analyst to draw the line between President Putin and Peter the Great (Johansen 2006:7). They were both said to have assimilated the Western approach, such as gaining economic benefits and new technology, but stressed at the same time Russia's independence and pre-eminence (*ibid.*). In other words, President Putin wanted a share of Western advanced technology and economy but not import its culture.

Power in the international power constellation, however, was defined by economic capabilities and by a specific set of values and norms. The Russian economic agenda illustrated effectively that the modernist state structure could be willing to incorporate some of the values of post-modernist states, such as economic liberalisation. Putin amended the norms of the game and chose to combine the principles of market economy and democracy with Russian realities. This amalgamation, however, could only with difficulty encompass the post-modernist values of democratic state building and open market economy. This duality has become known in political analyses of Russia as “managed democracy” (White in Allison 2006:22) or “sovereign democracy” (Rumer 2007:46). Both labels refers to the Russian government’s interest in protecting the Russian society and economic enterprises from foreign interference.

Putin, to the contrary, institutionalized a socio-political cohesive state structure and this focused on the equally significant domestic variable – state sovereignty and territorial integrity. His bureaucratic reforms facilitated more vertical power domination because only a strong state could enable a self-reliant Russia in the international system. Political dominance on the sub-global levels of affairs was a logical part of the same idea. Putin restructured state power so that domestic vulnerabilities could not hamper Russian ambitions in foreign affairs. This was recaptured in his second address where Putin (2001:2) asserted the domestic level to be politically more important than the international. Putin tactically implemented the policies that he thought would serve Russia best, but without compromising Russia’s sovereignty. State sovereignty and territorial integrity was a motivating and contributing factor to strategic cooperation because this embodied Russia’s culture and history as a great power. Disruption and fragmentation were therefore threats to Russian identity and Russian privileges. And the war in Chechnya signalled that the Russian state was willing to defend itself from secessionism using all means necessary.

Tight vertical consolidation of bureaucracy and economic integration were the main components in Putin’s Russia-specific development model. However, Russia’s vast

territory, together with a difficult geo-economic landscape (A. Lynch 2002) and significant national interests abroad, diminished the chances of being included as a member of Western institutions. But full-fledged membership was never the intention. In terms of economic development, Russia had special needs. These needs effectively demanded an interventionist state corresponding to traditional Russian strategic thinking on the state's role in economic affairs. Russia continued a protectionist economic policy that restrained Russia's own plan of a regional free trade zone (Buzan and Wæver 2003:411). Hence, Russia's great power normalization produced policies aiming to preserve power while directing the rhetorical focus on economic integration.

Of the last variable (alignment with the West in its fight against terrorism), its impact on strategic partnership with the West was significant but only because it intersected with the domestic interests of strategic stability in the region.

Russia's official response after 11 September 2001 can be contrasted with the reactions to NATO's intervention in 1999. Putin's act of alignment impelled Russian military analysts to use the word "revolutionary" (Medvedev 2004). Was it a change of strategic thinking? Not necessarily. Since the Russian Federation was established in 1991, its foreign policy was neither fixed in building alliances nor in balancing acts. Russian foreign policies have intermittently emphasized Westernism, multipolarity, and currently more or less strategic cooperation with the West. Soon after President Putin was appointed he promoted multipolarity. He aimed to facilitate the formation of a world power system in which "[e]conomic, political, science and technological, environmental and information factors are playing an ever-increasing role" (NSC 2000:1). Sectors of the society, such as economic and information sectors, were areas in which European countries had advanced more than the US superpower. Implicitly, Russia's multipolar aspiration was a balancing act against the US superpower. This further illustrates that Putin had intentionally preferred economic relations with European states as main partners. Economic integration

showed that Russia had national interests in common with EU member states and that Putin was an interested and interesting partner in trade.

When Putin aligned, at least provisionally, with the USA in the war against international terrorism, he contravened the Russian public and the Russian elite. He became known as the first state leader to have sent his condolences to President Bush. The constructivist understanding of securitizations and threat perceptions gives meaning to these kinds of adjustments in political affiliation. But was it a result of new threat assessments that led President Putin to pledge unconditional support in the fight against international terrorism? Was it a pragmatic response to a new conflict formation? Or was it part of a strategic plan?

This thesis has contended that the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 provided President Putin with an opportunity to play his Chechnya card on the global level. The findings of this thesis correspond with arguments of other scholars that the US led war on terrorism created a “window of opportunity” (Stent and Shevtsova 2002, Baev 2004, Clément-Noguir 2005:238). President Putin was presented with an opportunity to ally with the world’s superpower and receive political support for Russia’s own war in the south. Putin’s immediate response granted Russia international respect and did not obstruct the Russia specific development plan. While this was presented as a strategic u-turn in the international press, those in academic circles could not agree on whether it was part of a strategic westernization plan or simply an instrumental solution. Putin’s reduced focus on multipolarity and his eminent alignment were nonetheless parts of a plan that Putin had already endorsed already in 2000. Conveniently, the Russian leadership also wanted to sustain political control among the CIS countries as a way to secure Russia as a great power in the world. Russia’s alignment with the USA as official strategy in foreign affairs was likely based on a realistic assessment of lost influence, and on Russia’s prospects of regional dominance and relative position internationally. In the wake of 11 September 2001, the international security discourse revisited geo-political strategic thinking and a rhetorical resort to militarism. And Russia was invited to play

a key role (Neumann 2005:18-19). As a result, the alignment with the US superpower in the fight against terrorism helped Russia re-establish strategic stability in the larger post-Soviet space.

To sum up, the variables of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, balancing and alignment, and economic weakness all contributed to Putin's strategic partnership with the West. The variables had differing impacts on Russia's outreach however, with the two based on domestic imperatives providing a greater motivation than the one set in international security concerns. Nevertheless, the fight against terrorism did provide Russian leadership an opportunity to bring onside western powers that had previously condemned the administration's actions against Chechnya.

Of course, this study of Russian interactions with NATO and the EU has not been exhaustive enough to make claims of causality. This thesis has revealed, however, that Russia's strategic thinking was based on the ambition to restore Russia's global great power status. Clearly, economic relations with the EU enabled Russia's economic restoration and consisted mainly of national interests in economic growth. The economic rewards of normalization have had the effect of reinforcing Russian great power potentials. Likewise, Russia's response *to* acts of terrorism and the need to protect state sovereignty and territorial integrity *against* terrorism were important driving forces in Russia's state-to-state cooperation from 1999-2004. At the same time Russia became an attractive and important player in the US led 'coalition of the willing' that launched a global war on terrorism. By seeking closer cooperation with the West, with NATO and the EU, "the man who gets things done" (Herspring 2005:2) engaged in pragmatic and strategic partnerships with the West, partnerships that were to secure – and secured – Russia's return as a great and influential global power.

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Appendix

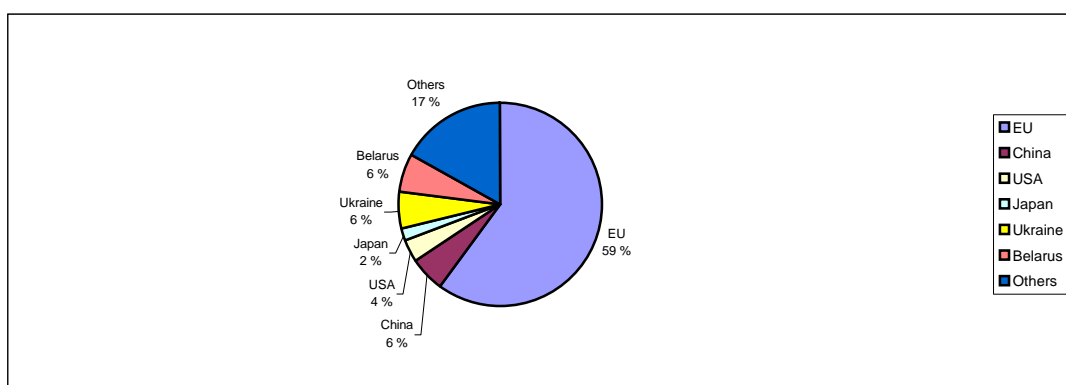
TABLE 1

IMPACT OF 70% DEVALUATION OF THE RUBLE (AUGUST 1998) ON CAPACITY TO SERVICE EXTERNAL DEBT

	<i>GDP (\$ billion)</i>	<i>GDP growth (%)</i>	<i>Debt service as % of GDP (\$)</i>
1997	436	+ 0.4	6.2
1998	278	− 4.6	11.8
2000	198	+ 7.0	14

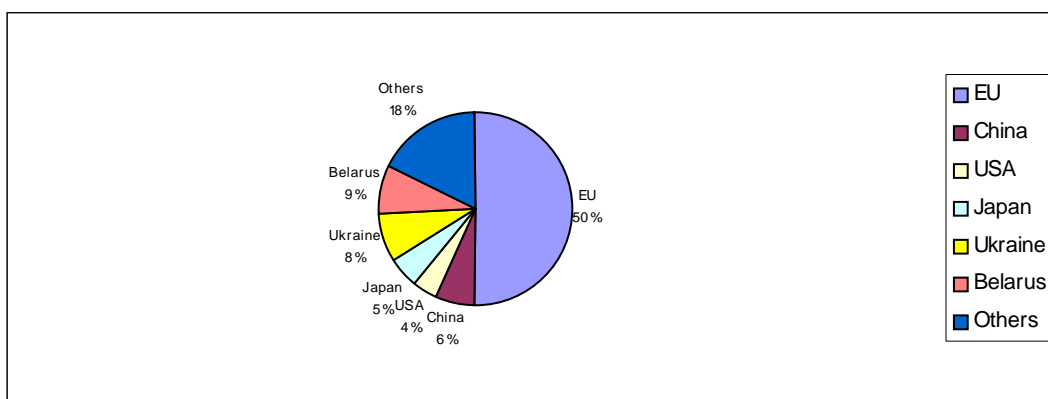
(A. Lynch 2002:32)

Figure 1: Russia's Exports by Country of Destination



(European Commission 2005:11)

Figure 2: Russia's Exports by Country of Origin



(European Commission 2005:11)